

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Sir Charles Sherrington, Professor of Physiology, Oxford University, 1913-35: correspondence, lecture notes, manuscripts, memorabilia, etc; also any books and other material relevant to the history of brain research in all its aspects for a new History of Neuroscience Library.

Colin Blakemore, University Laboratory of Physiology, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PT.

George Saiko (1892-1962), author of *Auf dem Floss* (1948), *Der Mann im Schiff* (1956), etc: letters to or from him sought; for inclusion in Volume 1, the Correspondence, of a projected four-volume edition of Saiko's works.

Barbara Brunner, Residenz Verlag, Gaisbergstrasse 6, A-5020 Salzburg, Austria.

Women during the Second World War: material sought for an anthology of letters and diaries written by women during the war.

Annette Tapart, 8 Globe Place, London SW3.

Angna Enters, American dance-mime, author and artist: any reminiscences, programmes, reviews and interview clippings, and photographs, of her London stage appearances and art exhibits from 1929-31, 1934, 1938, 1949-52 and 1956; for a bibliography.

S. Maedel, Department of English, Hellems 101 - Campus Box 226, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309, USA.

Helen Smith, author of *Not So Quiet . . . The daughters of War* (London: Albert Marriot 1930): information about the present copyright-holder or literary estate.

Ursula Owen, Virago Press, 41 William IV Street, London WC2 4DB.

Sir Thomas Andrew Lumisden Strange (1756-1841), Chief Justice of Nova Scotia and India jurist: whereabouts of his manuscript auto biography; for a partial edition.

J. B. Cahill, 79 Doul Avenue, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 1Z8, Canada.

Alwyn Parker (1877-1951), of Folsdown Thursley, Godalming, clerk and later librarian, Foreign Office: whereabouts and ownership of his papers, especially his diary; for a book on Britain's intervention in the First World War.

C. H. D. Howard, 15 Sunnyside Gardens, Mill Hill, London, NW3PD.

Leonid Pasternak: correspondence, photographs, unpublished memoirs, and information about works not registered with a major museum; for a catalogue raisonné.

Lewis Bernard Scholnick, Amherst, MA 01004-1043, USA.

Angus Wilson: information from non-standard sources for a complete primary and secondary bibliography now being compiled.

Rae M. Thomas, P.O. Box 19, New Vernon, NJ 07078, USA.

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'The Needs of Strangers'**

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Made in Birmingham

Peter Clarke

DAVID DILKS
Neville Chamberlain: Volume One, Pioneering and reform, 1869-1929
645pp. Cambridge University Press. £20.
0 521 25724 7

He was not a lovable man. The phrases of those whom he worsted in politics have lived on to damn him from beyond the grave. His was the "retail mind in a wholesale business" which Lloyd George deprecated from the point of view of a wholesaler who had been put out of business for good by a vindictive combination among retailers. Churchill, who suffered a comparable eclipse before destiny ultimately superseded, gave him credit for having been a good Lord Mayor of Birmingham - in a lean year. Even Atlee, though hardly renowned as a charismatic leader in this league, dismissed him as a radio set tuned to Midland Regional; and to others on the Labour benches he simply looked as though he had been "weaned on a pickle". Many bitter things had been said about his father Joseph, and it was his half-brother Austen who was slightly described as always playing the game and always losing it; but it was left to Neville Chamberlain to reap an unusually fecund harvest of mingled contempt and derision.

Chamberlain's political career ended in failure, as he could hardly fail to recognize. As Prime Minister from 1937, he had dedicated himself to the preservation of peace, and war broke out instead. With the coming of the Second World War, the whole Chamberlainite system entered a phase of terminal collapse. May 10, 1940, was not a happy day for the retail trade; the shutters came down at Birmingham Town Hall and the Midland Regional was switched off; infants cried in vain for their pickles. Once Churchill was installed as Prime Minister in his place, the Chamberlainite system seemed like a lost cause. But it was not. Moreover, Churchill and his cronies had now hijacked the Conservative party, which distanced itself from the embarrassing legacy of appeasement and unemployment, retrospectively perceived as the distinguishing features of the Chamberlain years. Old scores were paid off in a way that reverberated through the politics and historiography of the next two decades.

Politically, the men of Munich were stigmatized. Having had Churchill foisted upon it accidentally as leader in 1940, the Conservative party found itself the victim of a rather more purposeful accident when Macmillan succeeded Eden in 1957. The historical reputation of Chamberlain, inadequately safeguarded by Sir Keith Felling's official life of 1946, was not convincingly retrieved by Iain Macleod's quixotic biographical essay in 1961. Nor did Chamberlain's stock rise as a result of the historiographical reappraisal of the origins of the Second World War, inaugurated by A. J. P. Taylor (though Churchill's may have fallen a bit). Similarly, attempts to rehabilitate Baldwin, not ineffectual in themselves, have often sought to absolve him of blame for appeasement by making his successor carry the can. And whatever sophisticated revisions may now be accepted by historians, the very name "Munich" carries its own pejorative charge in Anglo-American politics. Particularly is this true of right-wing politics, as Mrs Thatcher's rhetoric over the Falklands and President Reagan's over Grenada demonstrates. If conservative leaders aspire to play Churchill on the world stage, who can hope to rescue Chamberlain?

David Dilks has all the right credentials as Chamberlain's biographer. He served an apprenticeship to successive Conservative leaders in compiling their memoirs: first the three bulky tomes giving Eden's apologia, then the five majestic volumes which Macmillan presented, not so much as his *chef d'oeuvre* as his *oeuvre* to his diaries. These mighty works are not lacking in wit and imagination - indeed their accounts of such episodes as Suez are nothing if not works of the imagination - but for their research they relied heavily upon the services of young Dilks, their page-boy, one might say, or footman. In the process

fitted to undertake the ultimate task of reconciliation in Conservative hagiology. A paper he gave to the Royal Historical Society a few years ago on Chamberlain and Churchill in 1940 set the tone. From this it appeared that there was no longer any need to choose which of the two to idolize since their final collaboration was one which "reflects high credit upon both and which may without extravagance be called crucial to the war effort". Hence Dilks's conclusion that whereas "we have had special cause to recall what Sir Winston used to describe as the long and splendid continuity of our island story, and to remember with affection and gratitude his own part in it", it should be thought "unnecessary and unworthy to magnify that part by denigrating others".

The author begins the first volume of his amply proportioned biography in the same way and on the same note. Throughout its six hundred pages there is a steady exercise in tilting the scales against prevailing adverse judgments



Quintin Hogg, government candidate in the Oxford by-election which was held soon after the Munich agreement, asking girls at a laundry to vote for him and show their confidence in Neville Chamberlain's foreign policy. Reproduced from *Picture Post* 1938-50, edited by Tom Hopkinson, now reissued in paperback (288pp, Chatto and Windus, £8.95, 0 7011 2838 5).

on Chamberlain, sometimes explicitly taking issue with the existing literature, more often wrestling with it covertly. Readers will owe Dilks a large debt of gratitude for putting before them so much of the evidence upon which they can form their own judgments. This is the story through Neville's eyes, indeed largely through Neville's correspondence, especially with his unmarried sisters. The tight-knit life-long loyalties of the Chamberlain clan are brought out well. Calling themselves "the Click", they prided themselves on the fact that if any one of them was hit, they all hit back. The Kennedys in our own day, the boys were determined to get on in politics partly to gratify the unfulfilled ambitions of their father Joseph, lying paralysed as an old man in the family home. It was Austen Chamberlain who was supposed to succeed - sent off to Cambridge, sporting a monocle and orchid to prove that he was a chip off the old block. It was Neville alone among the Chamberlains who actually got to the top of the greasy pole, but by a very odd route.

It took Chamberlain nearly fifty years, and takes his biographer nearly two hundred and fifty pages, before his arrival in Parliament. These pages are not wasted for they cover two episodes of abiding significance. The first was Andros. This small island in the Bahamas was said to be suitable for the cultivation of sisal as a cash crop. It was just the sort of undeveloped estate of which Joseph Chamberlain was to speak as Colonial Secretary, hoping to encourage British investment "for the benefit of the greater population and for the benefit of the greater population which is outside". Dilks comments that "this now sounds like a declaration of an obvious moral and practical duty". It is not clear, however, from his account some thirty pages previously whether such motives or "a change to recruit and repair the family's fortunes" were uppermost in Joseph's mind over Andros. Howsoever, young Neville - "a boy

world whatever", as he later put it - was dispatched to oversee the clearing and planting of the land.

Throughout five formative years he fought against the odds to make the enterprise successful, and it taught him a lot. When the labourers went on strike for higher wages, he slipped in others from Nassau: a good lesson in labour relations. The doings of the black workers provided him with a fund of patronizing stories to retail to his sisters, just as munitions workers and family servants were to do in later years. Little wonder that he wrote in 1895: "even if it turns out a failure I am not sure that I should regret the years I have spent here. The responsibility and independence have certainly called out whatever was in me and shown me that I was worth more than I thought." It revealed him, to Churchill's later surprise, as "a hard bitten pioneer from the outer marches of the British Empire!"

The wretched sisal, however, would not

once what Chamberlain should have done to put Lloyd George on the spot and to bring realities into line with the grandiloquent prospectus he had outlined. Failing to grasp the nettle at the outset, Chamberlain found his position unenviable. While he recorded that "it rather appeared I had no power to do any of the things that might produce any effect", his colleague Addison concluded: "He seems not to know even now what he is going to do and does not appear to have the remotest notion as to how he is going to do it." Brushing aside Macleod, Dilks opts for an elaborate extenuation of Chamberlain's record. In face of criticism, he maintains, the staff manifested "complete loyalty to the Director-General", but the fact that his source is a letter written by Chamberlain himself to his sister Hilda somewhat detracts from the authority of the statement. At another point even this source dries up and Chamberlain's inability to explain himself is attributed to "the inhibitions which prevented him from confiding even to Ida and Hilda his difficulties with the War Cabinet and other departments". Failing other evidence, it is a pity that Dilks did not find room to quote the final verdict of the man who made the appointment: "Mr Neville Chamberlain is a man of rigid competency. Such men have their uses in conventional times or in conventional positions, and are indispensable for filling subordinate posts at all times. But they are lost in an emergency or in creative tasks at any time."

Lloyd George's unflattering opinion of Chamberlain was faithfully reciprocated, and he is hardly allowed to step into this biography without receiving a slighting epithet from either its subject or its author. The fall of Lloyd George in 1922 helped Chamberlain's swift rise into the space left at the top of the Conservative party by the former Coalitionists, now discredited. Among these, of course, was Austen, and it was lucky that Neville's absence in America at the critical juncture meant that an action: "I have had my time of scorching humiliation and don't need to be told what it means." A certain amount of fence-mending all round had to take place before they both found places in Baldwin's Cabinet.

It was in 1923 that Neville Chamberlain discovered the great love of his life: the Ministry of Health. Here he was in his element, overseeing the vast field of local government as a connoisseur and, above all, working on traminers, not to mention other municipal functions. As he told Baldwin, "the work of my present office is congenial because it follows naturally from my training". Heartbroken, he was snatched from this demi-paradise within a matter of months to become Chancellor of the Exchequer. "Perhaps after all I may still go back to the Ministry some day", he wrote pluckily, "but it will be difficult as Austen knows to get away from the beastly Treasury." Only fifteen months later, his passion was requited and he found himself in a position to fend off Baldwin's offer of the reversion to the Treasury. "I remain convinced that I might be a great Minister of Health but am not likely to be more than a second rate Chancellor." His work at the Ministry of Health constitutes a solid record of achievement of which the existing literature has already taken adequate cognizance. This account tallies with it but is naturally personal rather than institutional in its emphasis.

Dilks devotes a whole chapter to the General Strike and another to its aftermath. Chamberlain's role in the negotiations with the miners is illuminated through his correspondence with his sisters. "The miners don't think of the reorganisation in precise terms of reduction of costs", he wrote; "they rather picture grievances, stupidities, injustices which they have personally come up against and they want to have a certainty that these things will be put right before they give up anything." The intransigence of the miners, however, evidently could not be relied upon, for the Government is shown, on the eve of the strike, fearful that they might be prevailed upon to accept the TUC's peace formula. Ready now for a fight, Chamberlain found the Cabinet tottering on the brink of a peaceful settlement and proposed a stern ultimatum to preclude this possibility. The Cabinet was instead saved by the refusal of the printers on the *Daily Mail* to print

John G. Little

The Lion at bay

Richard Pankhurst

ANTHONY MOCKLER
Haile Selassie's War
454pp. Oxford University Press. £17.50.
0192158678

Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935-36 can be seen from several distinct standpoints. For Ethiopia it led to the only foreign occupation in its millennia-old history. For Africa it was the greatest colonial war the continent had ever witnessed. For Italy it created an empire, gave the Duce immense if short-lived popularity, but led him into an alliance with Nazi Germany which was to drag him to ruin.

Italy's unprovoked aggression also cast a deep shadow over the rest of the world. Ethiopia seemed a test case for the League of Nations, whose credibility scarcely survived the Fascist victory. In Britain the spectacle of an aggressor unleashing all the instruments of modern warfare, including poison-gas, on a relatively defenceless people aroused profound emotions. The horrors, and unequal character, of the conflict were popularly encapsulated in the contrast between the blustering Fascist dictator and the dignified Ethiopian emperor, who addressed the League in Geneva and then withdrew to a lonely exile in Bath.

Food for jingoes

Vernon Bogdanor

JOHN M. MACKENZIE
Propaganda and Empire: The manipulation of British public opinion, 1880-1960
277pp. Manchester University Press. £25.
07190 14999

In *The Psychology of Jingolism*, published in 1901, J. A. Hobson castigated the music hall, "a more potent educator than the church, the

The story of Ethiopia, however, did not end there as many had expected, for the Fascist occupation was challenged by a resolute Patriot movement. Then, in 1940, Mussolini declared war on Britain and France, the Patriots obtained allies almost overnight and the Italian empire crumbled in half the time it had taken Mussolini's armies to reach Addis Ababa. Ethiopia, the earliest victim of Fascist aggression, became the first allied country to be freed in the Second World War.

Haile Selassie's War is a considerably shortened English edition of Anthony Mockler's *Il mio dell'Impero*, which appeared in Italy in 1972. A valuable feature of the book is that its author, unlike most labourers in the field, has not restricted himself to either the invasion or the liberation, but considers the entire period from Emperor Menelik's defeat of the Italians at Adwa in 1896 to the Fascist collapse in 1941. This time-span enables him to place events, and personalities, in a longer historical perspective. It is interesting to recall that Ras Mulugeta, the Ethiopian Minister of War in 1935-36, had fought at Adwa, while Haile Selassie was the son of an Adwa veteran. Mockler claims that the battle of Adwa likewise "consciously or unconsciously" preyed on the minds of "all Italian generals in Africa", even those fighting in Egypt's Western Desert in 1940. The author's historical perspective

recently begun to take seriously. *Propaganda and Empire* is beautifully illustrated with imperial souvenirs, advertisements for whisky and soap, and biscuit-tin lids, all evoking that far-distant country which was Britain's imperial past. The book will have an irresistible attraction for those who, like the present reviewer, feel unashamedly drawn to pictures of old cigarette cards and Edwardian bric-a-brac.

Yet MacKenzie is better at re-creating a vanished world than appraising its significance. rigorous, and one is bound to wonder whether he is not altogether too solemn about the significance of what he has discovered.

For what is, surely, remarkable about the imperial propaganda so painstakingly chronicled by MacKenzie is the comparatively small effect which it exerted upon those whom it was supposed to be manipulating. The Jingolism of the Boer War did not preclude a generous settlement with the enemy and the granting of self-government to the Boer republics shortly afterwards. Public interest in imperial ceremonies such as Empire Day, which did not secure official recognition until 1916, was but the prelude to the withdrawal from imperial responsibilities symbolized by the Irish Treaty of 1921 and formal recognition of the autonomy of the self-governing dominions. Both the Boers and Sinn Féin had a secret weapon in the sympathy of at least a large minority of the British electorate, and this ensured that rebels against the Crown would eventually secure almost all that they were fighting for.

The real effects of imperial propaganda are barely hinted at by MacKenzie. It served certainly to reinforce, although of course it did not create, that deep and instinctive patriotism which, as Orwell noticed, brought the British people together in times of danger. "What has kept England on its feet during the past year?" Orwell asked in 1940.

In part, no doubt, some vague idea about a better future, but chiefly the atavistic emotion of patriotism, the ingrained feeling of the English-speaking peoples that they are superior to foreigners. For the last twenty years the main object of English left-wing intellectuals has been to break this feeling down, and if they had succeeded, we might be watching the SS men patrolling the London streets at this moment.

But the obverse of that patriotism was, as Dr MacKenzie recognizes, a fixation upon the past, a complacency which has proved profoundly inimical to Britain's development as a modern industrial society. Seen from this perspective, the cult of Empire served to disguise rather than illuminate the difficult choices which the British electorate, through their political leaders, would have to make in the twentieth century. Yet one is bound to ask whether those who sought to "manipulate" public opinion were not in fact more deceived than those they attempted to manipulate.

similarly enables him to see the Patriots of 1937-39 as a new force, members of the *balaba* class, or squirearchy, rather than of the nobility which had initially led the resistance to the invasion.

Mockler's work on the Italian side, though unfortunately much curtailed in the English edition, is useful in placing Italy's military leaders in their Fascist and colonial context. General Graziani thus appears as a ruthless colonial soldier nicknamed the Hyena of Libya, while the elderly, bumbling De Bono is portrayed as an officer who had risen as a result of Mussolini's March on Rome in 1922, when he had given the Duce's "gang of thugs", the *squadristi*, an "aura of respectability". The 1937 Addis Ababa massacre, in which several thousand Ethiopians were murdered after an attempt on Graziani's life, seems to Mockler a return "on a larger scale" of the days of the *squadristi*. Observations of this kind are not made lightly, for the author feels that the Italians, despite their Fascist excesses, were "normally humane". He fails, however, to examine allegations of corruption made against several Fascist leaders, notably Teruzzi, but cannot avoid repeating the contemporary Italian joke: "Why does Teruzzi prefer brunettes?" Answer, "Because gentlemen prefer blondes."

The Ethiopian Patriots, whose aspirations and exploits still await a full-length study, are discussed with sympathy and perception. It is curious, however, that no account is given of the execution of Abuna Petros, an Ethiopian bishop who had encouraged their remarkable attempt to recapture Addis Ababa.

Mockler reveals that Sir Stewart Symes, the governor of the Sudan, was "charmed" by the Duke of Aosta, the polo-playing Italian Viceroy of Ethiopia, and actively discouraged attempts to plan for a possible Fascist invasion of the Sudan. After Mussolini's declaration of war on Britain, Symes opposed Haile Selassie's arrival in the territory on the ground that it would "invite reprisals" from Italy and "stir up a local's war". *Eden on visiting Khartoum* at this time, noted "a surprising reluctance to offend Mussolini". Racist attitudes also played their part, for there was "an unspoken, sometimes indeed an open complicity, between opposing white men, especially when there was a risk of native anarchy".

The attitude of the British Somaliland administration towards Ethiopian refugees receives some apparently well-merited criticism. The British, we learn, were "disapproving and parsimonious" to refugees in their territory whereas the French in neighbouring Djibouti "armed and retained their refugees". The more warlike refugees naturally went to Djibouti, but, after the fall of France, were obliged to cross into British Somaliland. They were promptly interned by their British "allies" and their arms were, "with equally inevitable stupidity, destroyed". It was perhaps not surprising that British Somaliland soon afterwards fell to the Italians. Its loss, often underplayed by British writers, had the direct result, according to Mockler, of convincing Graziani to launch his historic invasion of Egypt.

Haile Selassie's War, which is designed for the general reader as much as for the specialist, contains biographical notes on over 120 Ethiopian personalities as well as a glossary and ten sketch-maps. There are also notes on Ethiopian spelling and pronunciation, but the author's transliteration is at times erratic; "Fik" is surely an unsatisfactory English rendering for the town spelt by the Italians as Fiche, and "Dinchene" for the woman's name more often written Dinkenesh. It is surprising that Mockler, with his understanding of Ethiopia, should refer to its church as "Coptic" rather than Ethiopian. The book is also marred by its quota of errors. To cite a few: Kaffa was never a "Galla" but a Kafeche kingdom; the Ethiopian calendar is not "six to seven years behind the Gregorian" but seven to eight; Lij Iyasu's death in November 1935 was not "on the eve of the Italian invasion" since the latter had occurred at the beginning of October. There are in addition some typographical errors, such as Negretti for Naretti, Matteotti for Matteotti, Cheeseman for Chessman, Rava for Sava and *Ethiopian Observer* for *Ethiopia Observer*. But such blemishes scarcely detract from Mockler's study, which is a valuable contribution to its field and makes excellent reading.

Among the connoisseurs of suffering

D. J. Enright

FRANK TUOHY
The Collected Stories
410pp. Macmillan. £12.95.
0333385349

Pleasure tends to be a visitant, Keats wrote, whereas pain clings cruelly to us. Pleasure visits us as we read Frank Tuohy's stories (his three earlier volumes *The Admiral and the Nuns*, *Fingers in the Door* and *Live Bait* are collected here entire), more often than not yielding to a clinging, though less than cruel, pain. There is a certain kinship, not merely in the exotic settings, with Paul Theroux; indeed the Consul of "Two Private Lives" is possibly creepier, more odious, than any of Theroux's characters. But on balance Tuohy is less inclined to pass a final, irrevocable judgment; he shows less loathing, or contempt, for his creations than does Theroux in his recent collections of stories. Touches of relaxed humour, of the worldly shrewdness we call wit, soften the pain, somewhat. We have been in those situations ourselves; we have survived.

"I've got a surprise for you." The narrator of "The Admiral and the Nuns" comments: "Ever since I can remember, these words have possessed a more sudden and violent power to depress than almost any others." This particular surprise, we know, is bound to be painful in the event, it being a ticket for the Coronation Ball held at the British Club, somewhere in South America. The Polish husband of an Englishwoman behaves there in the way expected of him: "the peasant who comes to the big city to get drunk and chase women". Similarly, his wife behaves as is expected of her, a "pure Kensington" daughter of an admiral. One wants her to rise superior to her misfortunes (some of them self-induced), the more so in that she has been branded a trivial-minded product of the "genteel" class. To one's gratified surprise, she does: "Up the Navy!" Tuohy's favourite figure, the woman who

monly inhabitants of the Home Counties, who for one reason or another have failed to learn from experience; or else people, often Eastern Europeans, who have learnt rather too much and sometimes need to unlearn. The mistakes and misdoings of both groups would provoke an easy censoriousness were it not for the general insights which an even-handed author supplies *en route*. "You can judge your distance from civilization by the state of the dogs: tonight we were very far away." So what could be expected of that errant Polish husband, except what was?

Looking back to his schooldays, the narrator of "A War of Liberation" recalls how at the end of each term they sang "Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing" and he would then go home "to dismiss everyone else". After the War he was to encounter this same categorizing habit in Europe, and later in Shanghai: the English were classified as "unreal" by those "who had grown to be connoisseurs of their own suffering". In "The Trap" the author gets even for that classification. An Englishman who has taught in Poland is faced with a former student, a sad woman come to London specially to see him. Miss Rodzinska, with her salmon-pink coat, grey suit, grey sandals and handbag made of grey plastic, "belonged in fact to the Plastic Age of Communism, when people no longer look proletarian but lower middle class". Miss Rodzinska finds priggish fault with England but insists that she cannot return home now. The teacher reflects on "the tiny distance that divides the great peace of mutual attraction from the warfare of that which is not mutual"; the tiny distance is what he is trying to preserve between his knees and hers under the restaurant table. She is one of those "connoisseurs of their own suffering"; the suffering is genuine enough, and this is her "last throw", but - he tells himself - historical debts cannot be charged to the account of private individuals. "If Miss Rodzinska wanted to be loved, she must try at least to be as nice as other people. And poor, poor girl, she was not."

one touch of wry humour, Miss Peacock cannot endure visiting her brother on his sick-bed - death-bed as it turns out - but is happy to wait on her friend Laura, with whom she shares a cottage and who "had always been delicate and was likely to be so for many years to come". "Fingers in the Door" is painful, physically so, simply because poor Andrew gets his fingers caught in a carriage door.

His pain made no concession to the modesty of the circumstances: it raged there as it does before indifferent eyes in police cells and hospital wards. This time it had chosen to make its howling declaration in a first-class carriage of British Railways.

It is not the done thing to howl in public, and Andrew has spoilt his daughter's birthday outing and embarrassed his wife dreadfully. When he seeks to mollify her: "Look, love, there's an interesting yellow tint coming up", his wife retorts, "Don't be disgusting." But, like the Home Counties, gentility is too easy a target, particularly so now that it is to all appearances a dead horse. If gentility, snobbery, social pretensions have to be dealt with, probably the best way is that employed in "Thunderbolt", where the inane chatter of the two adult women is counterpointed with the unspoken brotherly knowledge of the two young people, the son of one woman and the "house guest" of the other, that before long they will be in bed together. For once a silence is truly pregnant.

The stories set in Poland or featuring Poles rank among the most impressive here; for one thing, the embarrassments they record are more deadly than those arising in the Home Counties, and the author seems himself to be more deeply engaged. The three Japanese stories are first-rate, too; and in this line of country Tuohy faces stiff competition from Francis King. The most quivery of social embarrassments occurs in "A Summer Pilgrim", when an ageing English poet is visited by a young woman, formerly a student of his in Japan. Obligated to partake of gluey lamb, Miss Hitomi is not helped by remembering the story of a Japanese bride who, after breaking several

To make matters worse, the only present from Japan that her old teacher wants is her.

The view that you can judge your distance from civilization by the state of the dogs is, by chance, ironically glossed in "The Matchmakers". The first embarrassment is suffered, in advance, by Staszek Kopczinski when his aunt, a former countess, instructs him to arrange a delicate matter with the niece of the British Ambassador: the English girl's cocker spaniel is to mate with the aunt's female counterpart. "Of course", Staszek tells the girl, "in this country is already danger of inbreeding." The initial discomfort quickly fades, since Englishwomen are used to animals: "He's two years old already and he may get to be no good, besides being frightfully neurotic." The second embarrassment is political, and considerably more serious, especially since Staszek makes a precarious living as a music critic. He is found to have been consorting with Western diplomats - so no more passports for him to attend music festivals abroad.

More complex and wholly unexpected in its dénouement is "A Survivor in Salvador", which concerns a Polish ex-prince, "living on promises, on his title, on his bridge game", who in his arrogance is prepared, like some other connoisseurs of their own suffering, to stoop to almost anything - "as if he believed that his contempt for his associates kept him from losing honour". Down on his luck, ready at last to give up the burden of surviving, he is rescued by a Brazilian prostitute. She too has suffered, but that is what she has learnt to expect, she is no connoisseur. And out of a seemingly total squalor grows an unlikely yet true tenderness. The story serves to modify the view, expressed by the narrator of another tale, that "whatever your experiences are, it is you who choose them to make the pattern". Here, and elsewhere in this rich collection, it is pleasure - something much more substantial than a mere cessation or evasion of pain - that allows us to see life.

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Change unchanging

Peter Hainsworth

JOHN ASHBERY
A Wave
89pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £4.95.
085635547 X

A Wave is John Ashbery's tenth book of poetry, and one of his best. Too much that he has written recently has been rather dull experiment. The quatrains of *Shadow Train* (1981) were all too often little more than lax five-finger exercises in superficially regular form, and *As we know* (1979) was dominated by the sixty pages of "Litany", which, in spite of fascinating sections (particularly on literary criticism), suffered from the over-casual juxtaposition of the two monologues of which it was composed. Still, some of the shorter pieces in *As we know* – say "Train Rising Out of the Sea" or "Late Echo" – had pointed in a different direction. It is this which is now followed through in *A Wave* and reaches its high point in the long, absorbing poem which gives the collection its title.

In a way Ashbery has returned to the serious playfulness of *Houseboat Days* and earlier books, but, though there is much in *A Wave* that is jokey, seriousness has the edge. Not that anything previously said is recanted: everything is, rather, reaffirmed, but with a more open voicing of implications and consequences. Final truths that used to be recognized only to be postponed or displaced are now given prominence, with the result that as a whole *A Wave* contains more explicit and more moving writing than perhaps anything else that Ashbery has done.

Ashbery is a poet of mutability, for whom nothing is constant except change itself. His concerns are with the incompleteness, instability and fragmentariness of our lives, and the impossibility of getting whatever is going on into a perspective that is in any way accurate. That is not in itself a particularly original or distinctive line of thought. But European poets

which is to be set some image of stability – God, perhaps, or love which alters not, or the powerful rhyme. Ashbery has always taken the opposite, more American path, and tried to embrace change, as if the mistake were to resist it or to look for a human order in it. In a sense he is an Emersonian who sees life as something much larger and more eventful than any individual or collective understanding can cater for. But he is confident; like Emerson (whom he sometimes echoes), that things will take care of themselves and of us if we only let them. "We get lost in life, but life knows where we are," is a line from "More Pleasant Adventures" which sums up, with perhaps cosy sentimentousness, that side of Ashbery which wants to surrender to the flow of things and believe that it is good. More frequently the dominating mood is a sophisticated New York hedonism that plays with images of contemporary America and with a soft-spoken, slightly mannered version of its language without assigning a definite value to any of the transient phantasmas. The visual and linguistic spectacle becomes enjoyable for its surprises, its sensual possibilities and the chances it offers of looking into an underlying void which Ashbery has always refused to see as terrifying.

What is disconcerting and – at least for enthusiasts – exhilarating about his work, is the absorption of the play of mutability into the substance of his verse. Ashbery is a radically mimetic artist who aims to reproduce experience as directly as possible, while making it plain that the gap between words and things is infinite; reality has always passed on, or at least is absent from what we are reading. There is a disorientation involved in encountering a veridically shifting something that constantly implies that it is nothing, and this makes his work seem difficult, provoking suggestions that he deconstructs the image at the very moment of creating it. And of course the risk is that this kind of writing will get completely out of control. "I always answer the telephone", Ashbery said in a 1979 interview, "and I find it helps me with my work." In some Ashbery poems the

person from Porlock has been allowed to interfere too much. But in his best work there is a brilliantly unpredictable shaping of the poem, which seems to spring directly from the flow of composition, much as the structure of a Japanese painting is supposed to do.

This shaping is a good deal more apparent in *A Wave* than in many other books, partly because the reflective element is so much more explicit. Take "I See, Said the Blind Man, As He Put Down His Hammer and Saw", which opens with a characteristic roller-coaster ride: There is some charm in that old music He'd fall for when the night wind released it – Pleasant to be away; the stones fall back: The hill of gloom in place over the roar Of the kitchens but with remembrance like a bright patch

Of red in a bunch of laundry. But will the car Ever pull away and spunky at all times he'd Got the mission between the ladder And the slices of bread someone had squirted astrology over Perhaps, probably standing there.

The prosiness is deceptive: it is really an undecidable invitation to read the lines as if they had the meanings of normal discursive writing. And once drawn in, the reader is hurled from one undefined context to another, the disorientation being compounded by the repeated shifts of register. Drawing-room conversation in the opening line, a little poetry ("the hill of gloom"), more colourful suggestions of past violence ("a bright patch of red in a bunch of laundry"), linguistic desecration ("squirting astrology") – all flash by before we can reach the man we can stop and look at. Earlier Ashbery might well have gone on into further metamorphoses or left us there to make the best of what is in fact a richly compressed symbolism. But the Ashbery of *A Wave* is insistent that we should think about the image that has just come into focus. "Can't you see how we need these far-from-restful pauses?" he now asks in the opening of the second section, and in the remainder of the poem he expands on the implications of this, its middle line and its turning point. The blind man has seen, but only

momentary, impenetrable forces for change which will eventually put an end to each of us and are already at work even as we read and think:

The armor Of these thoughts laughs at itself – Yet the distances are always growing With everything between, in between.

It is an elegiac, even sombre close to a poem that began flippantly. And this darker note sounds through a good deal of the collection. As serious hedonists have always known, to continue to take things as they come and to find pleasure in them when endings are in sight demands disciplined awareness, not resignation or a desperate resorting to transcendence. We know what is coming, that we are moving Dangerously and gracefully Toward the resolution of time. Blurred but alive, with many separate meanings Inside this conversation.

Toiling after Horace

Lachlan Mackinnon

ALISTAIR ELLIOT
On the Appian Way
82pp. Secker and Warburg. £5.95.
0436 142619

Alistair Elliot sleeps with malleable wax in his ears. He acknowledges that this won't silence "the noise inside", and has a brief dream about the muse who guides him along the route from Rome to Brindisi, taken by Horace in *Satires* 1.5. This vision rather contradicts his assertion that "My rule of thumb / Is to oppose the Id, and hope it's wrong", but in its imaginative richness it stands with a regrettably small number of passages in this long poem. Climbing Monte Tifata, Elliot finds:

A sad mass: there's an apt, some lipstick-traces Of fresco (bleeding hands and rubble faces). Three walls against the cloudy centuries.

This affective vignette makes Elliot lose his footing, though, and it is only six couplets later that the verse form starts again to coincide with



Eric Fischl's "Time for Bed" (1981), reproduced from *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture* compiled by Kynaston McShane (364pp. Thames and Hudson. £16.75. 087070391 9).

In the end it is the present which is still the issue. "Rain Moving In" makes a readily graspable statement of how most readers of poetry must be situated with respect to their origins and their final resting-places:

The dial has been set And that's ominous, but all your graciousness in living Conspires with it, now that this is our home: A place to be from, and have people ask about. But in other poems there is a more breath-taking evocation of a sustaining void that has to be seen even in the midst of destruction:

And so each day Culminates in meriment as well as a deep shock like an electric one.

Of more obscure ones, and books with no author, letting in Space, and an extraneous babble from the street Confirming the new value the hollow core has again, the light From the lighthouse that protects as it pushes us away.

A Wave is a rich collection which approaches its central concerns from a variety of angles. Haiku or pseudo-haiku accent the orientalingizing aspect of Ashbery's imagination. But then a series of jokey prose pieces, which Ashbery calls "haibun", play off prose against haiku. Other prose pieces are even more flagrantly unpoetic, especially the narrative "Description of a Masque", which spreads its pantomimic representation of metamorphosis over twelve somewhat loose pages.

Lastly there is the title poem, "A Wave" is a complex orchestration of the theme of mutability

his meaning.

Metre, indeed, is the poem's main problem. Elliot has chosen the heroic couplet, but uses so many run-on lines that the form becomes doggerel. Occasionally the verse responds to what it says, as when

Near me, a father bites an octopus Leg off, handing his wife the sinuous Body over his shoulder, as, mouth full, he pays. The slippery contortion and the mumbling alexandrine work here as rarely elsewhere. Elliot's rhymes range from the exact through the contrived ("filius terrae" with "We stare. I...") to the casual ("fellow" with "mazzarella"). Similarly, the rhythm is sometimes almost indiscernible as Elliot shifts and piles his stresses. The result is that the couplet becomes a nervous tic, insufficiently disciplined to respond to Horace's example, too nagging to suggest the ghost of classical grandeur.

Sixty-four pages of verse come with ten pages of closely printed notes that flatter the poem for its artfulness. In Terracina, Elliot turns dendrologist: "What kind of palms are these?" he wonders, but leaves the question

hanging. Perhaps his mind was elsewhere, as the note suggests: "I was thinking of Goethe's interest, when he first came to Italy in 1786, in finding the 'primeval plant' from which all other plants might be derived. (Palms belong to one of the oldest of plant groups.)"

There is too much intelligence here, too little feeling for life or language. When he arrives in Brindisi, Elliot grouches that "Brindisi is full / Of foreigners (there ought to be a cull) / Whining for something". Horace would have had more right to such a sentiment, which he would have had more wit than to express. Horace's poem is inconsequential but entertaining; Elliot's is merely inconsequential.

Nothing in the poem explains the importance of the Horatian precedent as other than an arbitrary literary. Horace was involved in affairs of state that he studiously and teasingly avoids, while Elliot just dislikes "the face that this week / Swims to the surface of the box and speak". Three working men dismiss Elliot's wish "to see / What Horace saw" as a clever excuse for getting away from home: he does nothing to persuade us otherwise.

To instruct and inflame

Rachel Trickett

RICHARD E. BRANTLEY
Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism
300pp. Gainesville, FL: University Presses of Florida (distributed in the UK by TABS). \$30. 0813007836
JOHN WESLEY
The Works: Volume 7, A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists
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848pp. Oxford University Press. £45. 0198125291
Hymns and Psalms: A Methodist and Ecumenical hymn book
888 hymns. Methodist Publishing House. £9.75. 094655000 X

Richard E. Brantley amply justifies his view that John Wesley's conception of human experience – including his idea of conversion and the consciousness of salvation, owed much to Locke's epistemology. He convinces first by his evidence of Wesley's "Lockean connection" – his abridgment of Peter Browne's *The Procedure, Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding* (1728), which Brantley takes to be "a theologizing of [Locke's] Essay". Browne, Bishop of Cork and Ross, was not so substantial a figure as to account for Wesley's interest unless, as Brantley contends, Wesley had first of all recognized the Lockean basis of much Dissenting interpretation of human cognition. The book goes on to examine Wesley's philosophical theology and again is convincing in its argument that this is based on evidence (of the senses as well as of reason) which precedes conviction. So far so good.

It is when Professor Brantley goes on to write of Wesley's intellectual influence, and of the parallel interpretation of human experience in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats that we find ourselves unable to join him on his personal critical expedition. It is as if a contemporary critic took it upon himself to examine the influence of Freud on contemporary theologians and then made the leap to a specific connection between this and the much vaguer influence of Freud on modern poets. There is always a general effect of the *Zeigist* in any age, and Locke, after Descartes, dominates eighteenth-century feeling, as eighteenth-century feeling throws its shadows over developing romanticism. But, useful though it may be to relate Wesley to a more expansive imaginative vision than that of his own age, it is pointless to try to make specific or even generalized comparisons between men whose pre-occupations and understanding of the nature of revelation were so substantially distinct.

Wordsworth's references to Methodism (in *Peter Bell*, for instance) are neglected; Coleridge's theological speculations are said to be rooted in "evangelical and empirical" ideas, as if these were already one and the same, and no careful analysis of the distinction between Coleridge's original Unitarianism and Wesley's faith is attempted. The second part of this book reads too much like jottings on loosely related topics to be more than a starting-point for general speculation; it is interesting in itself, but scarcely a secure foundation for the tracing of influence and conscious imitation.

Nevertheless, there is a way in which Wesley can be connected with the emerging spirit of Romanticism – not largely, through his philosophical and theological views, but more particularly, through his and his brother's idea of the influence of poetry, and of hymnody especially, on the feelings of ordinary men. The eighteenth century saw a remarkable re-birth of interest in the language of inspiration in religious writing. Robert Louth's work on inspirational diction in the Hebrew scriptures is the best-known example of this. But a study of the eighteenth-century hymn gives us a direct illustration of how, alongside the public, declamatory, descriptive vein of the Augustan, a more personal style of address and a more fervent tone, not lacking the verbal precision and rhetorical expertise of the time, were coming into favour. Lyric poets like Gray and Collins, moved by the antiquarian fashions of the mid-century, show a tentative feeling for

rapture or the enthusiastic which, it was thought, was the province of primitive poetry. Wesley's hymns, and more especially his brother Charles's, without any conscious antiquarian impulse, share this quality; so did Watts's (much admired of Johnson), and the hymns of other Dissenters, Doddridge, Newton and Cowper, for instance, as well as Smart's more original and eccentric devotional poems. The tradition of the Nonconformist hymn was essentially based upon scripture and especially on the Psalms; it incited personal devotion and public worship through the use of praise, petition and credal affirmation, not as part of a verbal ritual but expressed through communal song. The power of music was, from the start, an inextricable part of the appeal of Dissenting hymns, and such aesthetic as there was of music in the eighteenth century stressed its affective power, its sway over the sentiments and emotions of its auditors. The great hymns of the eighteenth century are lyrics, and they are more powerful in their emotional effect than most literary lyrics of the same period, though curiously, in their popular appeal, nearer to folk poetry and ballad than to the conscious creations of art.

The new and scholarly edition of John Wesley's Works now includes *A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists* (1780), all of them written by the brothers John and Charles, and this persuades us to look at familiar congregational hymns as poems, printed on the page, read privately rather than recollected with the sentiment attaching to tune and the congregational fervour of remembered services from the past. Charles Wesley's hymns stand this test so triumphantly that this edition, and, for wider reasons, the new Methodist and Ecumenical hymn book, *Hymns and Psalms*, published this year, must establish him as one of the finest lyric poets of his age. It is extraordinary to realize the range of his metrical accomplishment, the sustained fervour of his devotional imagination, the mastery of diction, of syntactical transition and of range of imagery is limited and repeated.

incorporate present-day scientific knowledge into the idea of the redemption, "Lord of the boundless curves of space / And time's deep mystery" (No 335 by Albert F. Bayly and Brian A. Wren), contrasts sadly with the preceding, Watts's "I sing the almighty power of God" – but the contrast is one of an inert as opposed to a lively language, rather than of any difference in intention. There are good modern hymns included here – John Arlott's (No 344), George Caird's (No 364) and Norman Nicholson's (No 380). Most illuminating in comparison are Robert Bridges's hymns, cool in tone, perhaps, but exquisitely contrived in metre, most skillfully fashioned in a way that looks back to the seventeenth-century writers. "Thee will I love, my God and King / Thee will I sing" (No 40) is as perfectly adjusted to music as No 572, "Think of a world without flowers", is impossible to accommodate to any conceivable congregational rendering.

But the power of this splendid anthology rests still with the great hymns of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Watts's "I'll praise my maker while I've breath / And when my eyes are closed in death, / Praise shall employ my nobler powers" leaps out from the page with its magnificent affirmation, repented in the concluding stanza: I'll praise him while he lends me breath. And when my voice is lost in death, Praise shall employ my nobler powers; My days of praise shall ne'er be past, While life and thought and being last, Or immortality endures.

The consciousness of the stanzaic measure required by the hymn wonderfully concentrated the syntax and vocabulary of these earlier poets and suited them to singing. Richard Baxter's meditative poem:

He wants not friends that hath thy love, And may converse and walk with thee, And with thy saints here and above, With whom for ever I must be

which has the tone of monologue, is still, in its simplicity, suitable for monologue.

For this to succeed it needs a common stock of scriptural allusion and knowledge, and Charles Wesley assumes this as he writes. But the Dissenters also intended a didactic purpose in their hymns; these were to instruct as well as to inflame. The lessons of scripture, the truths of revealed doctrine are the themes of their hymns. There is an assumption of absolute truth which lies behind their tone of simple assurance and its consequent rapture. It might well be thought that these hymns must, therefore, be period pieces, themselves instances of literary or devotional archaism and accessible nowadays only to the instructed or the scholarly few. The preface to the new Methodist and Ecumenical hymn book, *Hymns and Psalms*, disproves this notion completely. The compilers tell us that they not only consulted with other denominations in their choice of hymns, but that

careful note has been taken throughout of the public response to preliminary drafts of its contents. There is no doubt that one result of this public participation has been to give *Hymns and Psalms* a breadth of appeal and sympathy which should greatly assist its avowed intention of assisting the growing together of the people of God.

Public response demanded the retention of the familiar; there are more hymns by the Wesley brothers here than by any other group of nineteenth or twentieth-century writers. Nonconformist opinion has proved its devotion to the hymn as an expression of belief, communal and personal, and of credal, orthodox belief at that.

An interesting example of this comes from the modern hymns included in the collection. For the most part they are either verses of praise based, as in the tradition, on the Psalms, or reaffirmations of the Protestant doctrine of grace and redemption. One bold attempt to

Herald Angels sing" has no crib, no ox nor ass, merely a splendid statement of the doctrine of the Incarnation and the Redemption, but (assisted it must be admitted by Mendelssohn's tune) could only be rejected by the rashest of innovators. Yet does the present-day congregation understand what Charles Wesley took for granted: "Jesus, our Emmanuel"? The compilers do not alter it, though they changed a similar allusion in Robert Robinson's great hymn "Come thou fount of every blessing" (No 517); from "Here I find my Ebenezer" to "Here I find my greatest treasure": the rhyme in their new version is, it must be admitted, truer, and we may well forgive them that change.

The modest but genuine talent of Philip Doddridge finds its place here, and the fervour of Newton: "Amazing Grace" has been adopted by present-day folk singers, but the words as much as the tune ("how sweet the sound") convey the simple enthusiasm that the realization of salvation – the theme of so many of these hymns – can still, even by echo, convey. Thomas Ken's chaste simplicity with which we commemorate the day and the night, "Awake my soul, and with the sun / Thy daily stage of duty run", and "Glory to thee, my God this night / For all the blessings of the light", are still here to sanctify ordinary existence. And who, among the public consulted by the compilers of this new hymn book, felt that they could not respond to the language of these earlier poets? Few, it appears. For the diction of hymns was always directed to the congregation, to the company of ordinary faithful believers, and that company has responded as it always did to the claims of conviction, utterance and poetry.

Hymns are a form of love poetry. The Wesleys understood this and succeeded, in the tradition of their Dissenting predecessors, in separating the rapture of the redeemed from the private meditations, the erotic metaphor

Crusade and Mission

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European Approaches toward the Muslims

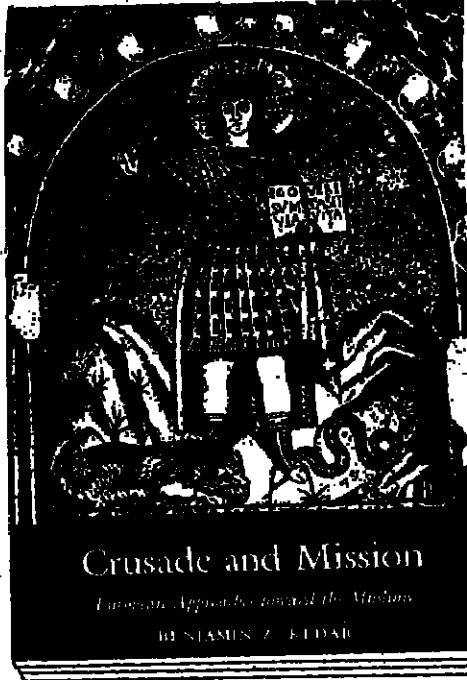
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Just in time

Putting faith in writing

C. H. Sisson

DAVID DAICHES
God and the Poets: The Gifford Lectures, 1983
227pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £19.50.
0198128258
DAVID JASPER (Editor)
Images of Belief in Literature
195pp. Macmillan. £20.
0333364015
MICHAEL EDWARDS
Towards a Christian Poetics
246pp. Macmillan. £20.
0333354028

If God is dead, the news has not sunk in as well as it should have done. If he is still flourishing, beyond space and time, perhaps this reluctance to believe the rumour is itself divine dispensation. However that may be, the reluctance is still widespread. The adumbration is a powerful presence in all languages; at least, subject to correction, I suppose so. It is certainly present in all the great literatures, so it is hardly surprising that literary critics and anthologists should be more or less acutely aware of it, whether they take it for what it claims to be or vociferously denounce it as a sham. In these four books, the perspectives are various, but the importance of religion for literary studies is nowhere denied. One of them, *Images of Belief in Literature*, edited by David Jasper, is a collection of papers "read at the first National Conference on Literature and Religion" in Durham in 1982. The holding of the conference may suggest some diffused uneasiness on the subject.

There might well be some uneasiness, even puzzlement, and it is felt by those whose primary interest is in literary criticism as well as in those who speak for religion. The authors and editors of the books here under review take somewhat differing views of the nature of the relationship between the two but none, it is safe to say, would be likely to endorse entirely Jonathan Culler's spirited defence of Emerson's critique of "propaganda for the

Poets comprises the Gifford Lectures he gave in 1983, quotes from the Deed of Foundation drawn up by Lord Gifford, who died in 1887. The lectures, said the founder, were to be for "promoting, advancing, teaching, and diffusing the study of Natural Theology in the widest sense of that term, in other words, the Knowledge of God, the Infinite, the All, the First and Only Cause, the One and Sole Substance, the Sole Being, the Sole Reality, the Knowledge of His Nature and Attributes, the Knowledge of the Nature and Foundations of Ethics and Morals, and of all Obligations and Duties thence arising". Even without the capitals, one would be left with a sense of the importance which had been attributed to the subject, in one form or another. A truly modern touch – the modern, of course, is now getting rather old – was that the lecturers were "not to be required to take any oath, or to emit or subscribe to any declaration of belief, or to make any promise of any kind". Not even a bishop would be excluded by that.

Professor Daiches notes in passing – as he well might do, in Edinburgh – the relevance of Hume's *Dialogues on Natural Religion* and goes on to discuss "the way God emerged in a number of different poets from biblical times to the present". It is a relatively down-to-earth subject well suited to one who claims only to be "a literary critic and a literary historian". Daiches has some unusual qualifications in relation to biblical poetry, for he is a Hebrew scholar and, as the son of a rabbinical family, had an early acquaintance with the language of the Old Testament. This gives his discussion of the Book of Job – to which he devotes a fascinating first lecture – a special interest. All his illustrations, however, are drawn from poets in whom he has a long-standing interest. His reading of Dante began with "a class in Italian for English students" when he was an undergraduate at Edinburgh long ago; he devotes a lecture to "Calvinism and the Poetic Imagination: From Burns to Hogg" and one to Edwin Muir and Hugh MacDiarmid, both of whom he knew personally as well.

Two English poets he draws on include Milton – his interest in whom goes back to the time when he was taught by Grierson – and George Herbert; the Americans include Wallace Stevens and Emily Dickinson as well as Whitman. "The poetic imagination", as Daiches says, "is a pretty tough faculty", and the variety of his illustrations enables him to show it operating through or beside a variety of systems of belief, some of which might be thought to be inhibitory, as Edwin Muir seems to have thought Calvinism to be. The operation may sometimes be effected by the poem going "round behind the theology", as Daiches says *Paradise Lost* does, "to develop unexpected meanings", but a more general cause must be that between a creed, as abstractly stated, and the poet's mind – or any individual mind – there is a vast gap. What is apprehended by the observing mind is the one visible and audible world, seen and heard through the medium of all that mind has inherited from near and far. In all this the observer's theology will play no more than a modest part at best. Daiches reaches the conclusion that "far from inability of a reader to share the author's beliefs preventing him from appreciating a poem, such an inability can liberate the reader to see the poem as something more than a document of faith". He even suggests that "it is the sceptic who is the one capable of the most generous response to poetry of different ages and cultures".

One might want to qualify these conclusions, but Daiches has done well to take the argument thus far. He takes it too far, I think, when he suggests that the medieval Christian may have got less out of the *Divina Commedia* than later readers. As well say that we understand the literatures of other cultures better than that of our own. I do not believe it; it is through our own language, and the rest of our inheritance, that we have to approach the works of other times and places. The point seems obvious enough, though it is not understood by the sociological monsters who have kicked the Prayer Book and the Authorized Version out of doors.

Images of Belief in Literature, the symposium edited by the Rev David Jasper, includes papers entitled "Job and Sophocles", "W. H. Auden: 'Horae Canonicae'", "Bishop Lowth and the Hebrew Scriptures in Eighteenth-Century England", "Simone Weil" and "Middlemarch as a Religious Novel" as well as more general matter on the relationship of literature and religion. No doubt it is only by such particular studies that the subject can be advanced. No particular study, however, can proceed very far without some general notion of what one is looking for, and both F. W. Dillistone's introduction and John Coulson's opening piece are aimed at providing some indications. The precariousness of the subject is suggested by Canon Dillistone's quotation from Graham Hough: "For intelligent people of today literature has come, consciously or unconsciously, to supply the patterns of conduct, feeling and imagination that were formerly within the sphere of organised religion." Shades of Matthew Arnold! The approach of Dr Coulson, who is building up a joint school of Religion with Literature in the University of Bristol, seems to be primarily historical, though the fact that he can more or less equate his four periods with four "modes of relationship between religion and literature" leaves one in some uncertainty on the matter. He touches on the question of how far quality of writing is involved in telling the truth; that I take it is the import of his question: "Is it the truer for being well said?" It might be contended that what is not well said says nothing at all. That is perhaps only a literary point of view, but it suggests that any complacency about what Coulson calls a "dissociation" of "culture from religion" is out of place. One might even ask if such dissociation is possible.

The danger of all general theories about literature is that they tend to become more interesting, to the clever people who discuss them, than literature itself. This is confusing because "literature" is after all only good writing, which may be about anything, from the siege of Troy or the death of Julius Caesar to the virtues of tar-water or the principles of Pythagoras and all that comes between.

Pythagoras and all that comes between. This adjustment the free modulation between keys that Bach exploited in his great Fantasias would be impracticable – the sound would be exquisite in C major, intolerable in B. But a price has to be paid, one that Bach was prepared to pay while Helmholtz was not (or reluctantly, at best) – the major and minor thirds are mistuned to the extent of nearly 1 per cent. This would not matter if the notes were pure, without overtones, but the overtones clash unless the tuning is Pythagorean. Thus the fourth overtone of middle C (B two octaves above) and the third of E, its major third, differ in frequency by ten cycles a second in equal temperament, instead of coinciding. The trained ear can hear the fluttering due to this, and

tries to hedge his subject a little by calling his essay "Religion and Imagination". To draw the boundaries of the imagination must be a very uncertain enterprise; to invent a theory of literature which stops at those dubious frontiers would be no great service to the health of common speech. Michael Edwards, as he sets out on his stiff climb *Towards a Christian Poetics*, is well aware of the vastness of the territory which extends around his subject. For him, to write "is inevitably to open oneself, via language, to everything essential: to the issues of the self, of the world, of the other, of God". My only quarrel with that is that I would ask whether one must not add: "and all the trivial things we encounter as well". "We do not understand literature without a theory of language", Edwards asserts, "and we do not understand either without a theory of life." It is a bold, even heroic, stand. But we do not really start with theories; if we are wise we do not end with them either, however we may choose to entertain ourselves on the way. Some of us may have to be content simply with "We do not understand", in relation to these large matters; in any case it is perhaps better to talk of recognizing literature than of understanding it. We do well if we begin to understand what a particular author is saying. Edwards's underlying "theory" is an attempt to describe the process of writing in terms of biblical Christianity, and he makes excursions into non-Christian theories and looks at non-verbal arts. The result is a book packed with ideas which demand further development. There is so much apparatus that the basic subject risks being lost sight of. Surely a Christian cannot require a particular kind of "poetics", only a true one – which must mean something, however laconic, that keeps close to the poetic material. Edwards's chapter on Eliot – which, unlike the others, is in the form of notes rather than of consecutive discourse – does this at least intermittently: how closely one judges it to do so must depend on the view one takes of the *Four Quartets*.

Bishop Butler, who was no mean performer as a writer of analytical prose – itself an important branch of literature – says in the *Analogy*, as John Coulson reminds us, that "Religion is a practical thing." So is literature, for those who practise it; so, above all, is poetry, for the poet.

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Pythagoras' other theorem

Brian Pippard

H.F. COHEN
Quantifying Music: The science of music at the first stage of the Scientific Revolution, 1580-1650
308pp. Dordrecht: Reidel. Dfl 145.
90277 16374

What Moses is to the Law, Pythagoras is to the theory of music; to him tradition ascribes the discovery that consonant pairs of notes, giving pleasure when sounded together, have frequencies (as we should now put it) in simple numerical ratio – 2 for the octave, 3/2 for the fifth, 4/3 for the fourth etc. All but one of the scientists discussed in *Quantifying Music*, from Kepler to Huygens in the years 1580-1650, started from this basic result and tried to find a reason for it. Only Simon Stevin seems to have questioned the Pythagorean principle, but he had discovered fractional indices in arithmetic and was more concerned to promote his consequent invention of equal temperament. It was probably a help that his ear was rather imperfect; he shows no sign in his writing of actually enjoying music.

The question of temperament, ie, how an instrument should be tuned, runs through the whole story. There is no way the notes of an organ can be tuned so that every fifth (eg, C-G) is in the ratio 3/2, every major third (C-E) in the ratio 5/4 and so on. A good unaccompanied choir or a string quartet (it is said) adjust themselves to each chord so as to find consonance, but the piano and organ cannot, nor a fretted instrument like the lute and guitar. Stevin's suggestion, enthusiastically championed a century later by Sebastian Bach and his son Emanuel, was to make all semitone intervals equal, so that the frequency ratio for each successive semitone was the twelfth root of two, 1.0595. The ratio for the octave, of twelve semitones, is then 2, as required by Pythagoras and all that comes between.

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Too much aplomb

Rupert Christiansen

CHERYL MACDONALD
Emma Albani: Victorian diva
205pp. Dundurn Press Ltd, PO Box 245,
Station F, Toronto, Canada.
0919670741

Ernest Newman, reviewing Emma Albani's autobiography, *Forty Years of Song*, remarked that its "tediousness was equalled only by its artlessness". Cheryl MacDonald has written a quaint and pleasant little monograph, but similarly fails, perhaps inevitably, to animate a rather faceless personality and career.

Born in 1847, Albani was a convent-educated Quaker who made a smooth passage down the channels which regularly nurtured the nineteenth-century prima donna. Having won a local reputation as a church singer, she was subsidized by home-town benefit concerts which enabled her to complete her musical training in Paris, where she studied under the great tenor Duprez. After a season in the Italian provinces, she made her Covent Garden debut in 1872, concentrating on the French and Italian lyric-colouratura repertory (*Faust*, *Mignon*, *La sonnambula*, *Rigoletto*, etc) dominated by Adelina Patti.

Later, she won acclaim as an interpreter of

recoils from it. Herein, says Helmholtz, is the clue to the distinction between consonance and dissonance – the Pythagorean consonances minimize the clash of overtones. Confirmation of this, for me at least, comes from setting up two tunable sources of pure notes, free of overtones. Not only do almost all intervals seem agreeable, but it is hard to adjust the notes to a simple ratio like a fifth or a third with any degree of precision. As soon as overtones are added the adjustment becomes easy.

But there is a snag, which the principals in the book under review were well aware of, but tried to ignore. In Pythagorean terms the interval of a fourth (C-F) is an excellent consonance, to be preferred to the major and minor thirds. Yet this preference is utterly rejected by practical musicians. At the time when the learned were chanting their plain-song with the addition of parallel fifths and fourths, a sturdy folk-music in Wales and Northumbria, as still survives today, was adding thirds to tunes in the major mode, in blatant disregard of theoretical preferences. And it was the major scale and the thirds, probably widespread among the profane, that survived to form the basis of classical music, to say nothing of pop styles which retain the third when almost all else is jettisoned.

Can we see in Kepler, Galileo, Merenne and Huygens, as well as (dare I say?) in Helmholtz, too great a devotion to the mathematical ideals of Pythagoras and an overdevelopment of the analytical ear? Most listeners, and many composers, I suspect, are simply unable to hear beats between overtones until their attention is directed to them, and are prepared to tolerate a degree of mistuning. The smooth beauty of perfect tuning is a bonus, to be sure, but not the prime virtue of a performance. I think one must look beyond arithmetic, perhaps to the physiology and psychology of hearing, perhaps to anthropology, to discover why the third is so beautiful for Westerners, while the fourth is simply in terms of two notes at a time. Why, for example, does the abominable tritone (C to F sharp, or D to A sharp) become tolerable, indeed positively pleasurable to dwell on, when two are combined into a diminished seventh?

One thing I feel confident about is that nothing written by the authors whom H.F. Cohen discusses has the smallest relevance to the problem. They were attempting to apply to music the mathematical analysis they had found so fruitful in astronomy and dynamics, but they knew virtually nothing of the physics of sound and their theories were largely misconceived. The pre-scientific writers, including Kepler, were drawn towards Pythagorean

Sullivan, and sang in the first performance of his *The Golden Legend*. More interestingly, she made a successful transition to the lighter Wagnerian roles, albeit in heavily doctored and translated versions. She toured widely, married Ernest Gye, the manager of Covent Garden, and declined with dignity, suffering only from the financial depredations of the First World War.

It is simply not very gripping stuff. Albani herself embodied the gracious and matronly aspects of the Victorian prima donna – Queen Victoria admired her enormously – and like Lind or Tietjens she managed to be both professional and highly respectable. Her art, based on a firm and well-produced soprano, evidently had a complementary aplomb, which could rise satisfactorily to the moderate demands of Verdi's *Desdemona* and Wagner's *Elza*, but hardly shook the soul.

MacDonald's concern is narrative commemoration rather than analysis, and although she dutifully covers the ground, the results are one-dimensional. Particularly thin is the picture drawn of Patti, Albani's major rival, whose immense drawing-power was crucial to the survival of the mid-Victorian opera business. Patti made serious mistakes and caused considerable offence, but, as Shaw's criticism makes plain, she had a charm and individuality of style that made Albani sound staid and genteel.

number mysticism and would see hints of the world's harmony in everything. In reaction the early scientists developed a theory of coincidences which in favourable circumstances could have evolved into Helmholtz's theory. But in its primitive form it was too flawed to survive while the physical theory of sound was slowly being constructed. Helmholtz in 1862 ignores this early work altogether, but is full of praise for the insights of Rameau, a true musician. Perhaps a scientist may be permitted to remark that the relation of science to music is not unlike that of philosophy of science to science itself – ultimately it is the practitioner who understands what is really going on.

I cannot accept Dr Cohen's claim that her work is a significant contribution to the philosophy of science, as a fully documented example of a "theory replacement". The replacement involved is of a tentative scientific speculation replacing the musical equivalent of astrology, hardly parallel to, say, Lavoisier's confident overthrow of the phlogiston hypothesis, which was itself a scientific speculation. It is difficult to see who should be recommended to read the book other than specialists in the history of early science who may find aspects of the lives of their subjects that they were unaware of. The hybrid scientist-musician may, like me, be stimulated to think afresh about the relation between his two interests, but it is a hard way of going about the business, and I wish the material had found a home instead in the pages of a learned journal.

Elizabethan experiments

Wilfrid Mellers

WALKER CUNNINGHAM
The Keyboard Music of John Bull
274pp. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press
(distributed in the UK by Bowker). £37.75.
08357 14667

Though not the greatest, John Bull is in some ways the most fascinating of the brilliant galaxy of English composers who were Shakespeare's contemporaries. He was born about the same year as Shakespeare (1563-4), and died in 1628, in foreign parts. His character belies his name, for nothing could be more remote from the stocky, rubicund John Bull of eighteenth-century convention. The Elizabethan Bull – to judge from the striking portrait in the Oxford Examination Schools – was long, lean, pale, fiery-eyed. His reputation was legendary both for learning and for virtuosity; and that he should have been mainly a composer for keyboards at a time when the mainstream of organ or virginals lent itself readily to harmonic, rhythmic and figurative experiment. Until now the only book on Bull has been a biography by Leigh Henry, prompted by near-Hollywoodian fictional excess by the haze of rumour that surrounds Bull's life. Walker Cunningham redresses the balance, producing a work of formidable scholarship which eschews speculation not only about Bull's ambiguous activities as musician, churchman, lover and possible diplomat, but also about his (demonically possessed, some said) prowess as a virtuoso and a creator of distinctively quixotic music.

The bulk of the book is taken up with sorting out, if not clearing up, the chaos of the sundry manuscript versions of Bull's works, adjudicating between them, deciding on their authenticity. This is well done and needed doing, though there will probably never be a definitive canon of Bull's works since he was so uncanonical a character. Cunningham also offers an account of all the more significant pieces, describing their structure, the number of strains a pavane contains, the nature of the variations on it, the possible origins of each type of figuration, English, Flemish or Italian, derived from this or the other composers, notably Cornet and Sweelinck. This is labour not to be sniffed at, though it tells us nothing about the musical personality of Bull himself. Clearly it is not that Cunningham is insensitive to Bull's music. He occasionally allows a "beautiful", a "lovely" or an "inspired" to escape his lips while making no attempt to tell us in what the beauty, loveliness or inspiration consists.

He has a fine, illuminating paragraph, triggered off by the (documentable) phenomenon of seventeenth-century melancholy, on Bull's "Melancholly Pavane", and is appropriately awed by the extraordinary (his word) qualities of the visionary *In Nomine* in 11.4. What fails to come over is a sense of the composer's uniquely Bullish qualities, which fuse grandeur with quirky fantasticality in ways that recall the prose of Donne's sermons or, at moments when he's weird rather than inspired, the medley of myth, medieval theological lore and modern pseudo-science typical of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. The man who composed that "extraordinary" *In Nomine*, the luxuriantly complex "Walsingham" variations,

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the exuberantly extrovert "King's Hunt" and the passionately introvert chromatic "Pavane and Galliard" in memory of Queen Elizabeth, also wrote those intimate little autobiographical pieces with tunes as guilelessly beguiling as folk-songs – of which "Bull's Goodnight" is the most deeply touching. He also wrote less convincing but startlingly exploratory pieces such as the notorious chromatic Hexachord Fancy (on the technicalities of which Cunningham hedges his bets), not to mention many passages of self-indulgent keyboard pyrotechnics and tediously elaborated technical ingenuities which Cunningham justifiably, if schoolmasterishly, reproves. Though these emotional and intellectual contradictions endemic to Bull's music are mysterious, they are not beyond the reach of critical analysis. Cunningham says nothing about them except that they exist, and his decision, if regrettable, is respect-worthy as well as respectable. His book provides material indispensable to the critical assessment of Bull's significant place in our and

10th ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF LANGUAGE

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individual and communal, and which is still necessary and available to believers of a later age. Their hymns, and those of their contemporaries, strike a chord as Johnson grudgingly admitted of Gray's *Elegy*, that comes home to the business and bosom of everyman.

In congratulating the compilers of the new Methodist hymn book, I (perhaps I might say we) "rejoice to concur with the opinion of the common" worshipper, not only with regard to the ancient hymns of the Church, the great works of the eighteenth-century Non-conformists, the fervent romanticism of the nineteenth-century believers (it is sad not to find Baring-Gould's "Now the day is over" included here), but to those modern successors who have, in spite of fashion, expressed their faith in such a way as to provide today's congregations with some assurance that the tradition of congregational praise and affirmation is not dead.


No one reading any of these three books can fail to recognize the influence of Protestantism and its most powerful popular contribution to devotion. It is good to remind ourselves, too, of the simply literary importance of hymnology. For this is a popular poetry; however sophisticated, however literary, its intention was always to appeal to the many, and, in the most aristocratic periods, its purpose was to command the widest audience. Poetry has ceased to make this claim in the present age. We think of the eighteenth century as another age of élitism, when it needed a later Wordsworth to ask for the language of poetry to be the language of ordinary men. But the hymn writers thought of this before him. One of Charles Wesley's most beautiful poems might be a chapbook celebration of devotion in its simplicity; at the same time it has the sophistication of genius in its statement of the relation of the creature to its Creator. Wesley's language, as always, is simple; his meaning profound; his poetic instinct, of economy, in imagery, in understanding, perfect. Whoever reads this poem (or sings this hymn) has touched on a vision of human experience which

On the mean altar of my heart
There let it to thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble prayer and fervent praise,
Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work; and speak and think for thee,
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up the gift in me –
Ready for all thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete.

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To survive and to flourish

Jeremy Waldron

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF
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This is a book about the imperfections of a "caring society" and the limits of the welfare state. It is about the ability of politics and social organization to accommodate and satisfy the diversity of human needs, and the nature of caring and social concern in the crowded, divided and impersonal communities of the modern world. But it has very little in common either with a "New Right" tract on the reduction of taxpayer provision, or with any left-wing condemnation of the intrusive surveillance and class domination that state bureaucracies involve in the context of welfare institutions. Instead, Michael Ignatieff writes about the "demand" side of social provision: the nature of needs, their material, spiritual and social dimensions, and their relation to what he calls "our shared language of the human good".

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these problems. Nor does he undertake philosophical analysis of the concepts of *need* or *society* (he has tried). He says, "In these unruffled roots of contemporary political philosophy altogether". His method is to probe, in a meditative way, our thinking about need. First, his own thoughts on what he sees around him in London and elsewhere, and second, the thoughts of our civilization on passion, sin, tragedy and economy that underlie our language of the good.

The book opens, a little awkwardly, in a confessional vein. When the author ventures out from his home on to the streets of London, he encounters old-age pensioners, cold, thin, self-possessed and alone, rummaging through piles of fraying clothes on a market barrow. He reflects on his relationship to these people. They are strangers to him, yet they are con-

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This is never answered directly. Instead Ignatieff moves on to reflections of a less personal kind: The bulk of the work consists of a series of meditations on six texts: Shakespeare's *King Lear* (Lear's speech, "reason not the need!" and his musings on the "unaccommodated" humanity of poor Tom); Augustine's *The City of God*, particularly the

story. The affair may suggest a guilty conscience about communist associations, but nothing worse than that. The incident was exploited by the McCarthyites in 1947 when Tsuru came voluntarily before the Senate committee, hoping to clear his name. Instead he was read a long list of persons in government jobs and asked which of them he knew. The committee then blatantly announced that Tsuru had volunteered a list of communists in government. Norman was on the list. Bowen has studied formerly classified documents in FBI files and records of the State Department and the US Army and Navy without finding incriminating evidence on Norman.

An important piece of evidence in any attempt to understand Norman's suicide note (found in Taylor's essay but not in this book). Addressed to his elder brother Howard, a clergyman, the note read: "I am overwhelmed by circumstances and have lived under illusions too long. I realize that Christianity is the only true way. Forgive me because things are not as bad as they appear, God knows they are terrible enough. But I have never betrayed my oath of secrecy, but guilt by association as now developed has crushed me. I have prayed for God's forgiveness if it is not too late."

Among the tributes from friends and colleagues printed here is a touching and convinc-

Montreal

smoking Lévesque seemed obviously, even dangerously, weary, high-strung and romantically wrong politically." Richler offers little evidence to support his adverbs.

government's language legislation, for example, he states "Bill 101 ruled that wherever a child came from — abroad, or even from another Canadian province — it had to be educated in French, unless one of its parents had been to an English school in Quebec." In fact, the law allows a child who was receiving English-language education in the province in 1977 to finish his schooling in English, and it grants the same right to any younger brothers or sisters. Furthermore, a man or woman who lived in Quebec in 1977, and who had been educated in English anywhere in the world, continues to enjoy the right to send children to English-language schools. Nor does the law prevent any resident of the province, no matter what his citizenship or mother tongue, from attending one of the junior colleges or the three universities that function in English. The sup-

passively repressive and intolerant provisions of Bill 101 are for the most part more generous to Quebec's English-speaking population than are the laws anywhere else in Canada towards French-speaking minorities. Yet Richier describes the PQ's language law as a "vengeful and mean-minded . . . enormity". He fails to grasp that in the 1960s and 70s the assimilation of tens of thousands of immigrants (Greek, Italian, Portuguese and so on) into English-language culture had begun to menace the survival of Quebec as a distinct, Francophone society. The real irony is that Bill 101, by providing Quebecers with a large measure of linguistic and cultural security, has deprived the *indépendantiste* movement of its strongest weapon.

Kuchler knows next to nothing about western Canada or the Maritime provinces, and his travel articles in *Home Sweet Home* can be disconcertingly inept: "The mountains are a spectacular sight and their initial effect is totally exhilarating." But more important than mere clumsiness is his recurrent inability to carry on an argument for more than two paragraphs without resorting to snide digressions or witty irrelevance. "Canada is enduring bad times," he announces portentously; but the evidence moves swiftly from unemployment statistics to disoriented American who stumbles through Toronto, and to the failure

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Part Two of the volume contains assessments of Norman's scholarship and Part Three reprints lectures and essays by Norman himself on the general topic of freedom. Professor Bowen sums up in an interesting epilogue "Irony or Tragedy?" A strong impression of Norman emerges from this work of collective defence. He was a polished professional in his scholarship and his diplomacy; his judgment was so sound that men like MacArthur and Pearson felt they could rely on it implicitly; and one of his most deeply felt traits was loyalty. The suicide remains a puzzle; Charles Taylor's explanation may be the most probable, that at a profound level Norman remained in some sense a Japanese for whom death was noble than dishonour.

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organization to accommodate and satisfy the diversity of human needs, and the nature of caring and social concern in the crowded, divided and impersonal communities of the modern world. But it has very little in common either with a "New Right" tract on the reduction of taxpayer provision, or with any left-wing condemnation of the intrusive surveillance and class domination that state bureaucracies involve in the context of welfare institutions. Instead, Michael Ignatieff writes about the "demand" side of social provision: the nature of needs, their material, spiritual and social dimensions, and their relation to what he calls "our shared language of the human good".

The crucial points, for me, are the following. First, the reflection in Chapter Two on what we can be said to owe to one another simply as human beings: what a strong and powerful member of the species owes to a member who is weak and needy, and who can offer no inducement nor hold any threat against him. Second, in Chapters Three and Four, his examination of the possibility that a human life may be lived – indeed lived well, as it seems from the inside – through the passions and sensibilities of the flesh without spiritual consolation or religious fear of any kind. Third, in a few pages near the end of the book, the author's insistence that in our understanding of the human need for community, we must repudiate the nostalgia for Athens or Geneva or the *Gemeinschaft* of the gothic village that characterizes much philosophical discussion, and confront openly in the light of modernist culture such questions as "Is there a language of belonging adequate to life in Los Angeles?" Now, to single out these discussions is certainly to abstract a little from the richness of the work as a whole and the diversity of the scholarly by-ways that Ignatieff explores. But at each of these points, cosy nostrums of liberal concern about human need are challenged, and the challenge is all the more effective for the hesitancy and the doubts that the author's reflection reveals in his own thought about these matters.

Before considering these discussions in more detail, it may be worth making one or two points as to the assumptions of the contemporary philosophy. Ignatieff's writing is at its weakest where careful analysis is most called for. For example, he says, in the compass of a few pages: first, that what we need to survive and what we need to flourish are two different things; second, that the language of need should be confined to the expression of what people must have in order to live up to their full potential; and third, that the only goods that a needs-language can specify are goods which are absolute prerequisites for any human pursuit. This is confusion rather than contradiction, but it points to problems in the language of need which, in an enterprise of this sort, cannot simply be shoved aside in a box labelled "philosophy: not wanted on voyage."

Here is a common argument about needs (though not one that Ignatieff puts forward): "All needs have a claim to satisfaction: if someone needs food and shelter, we should see to it that he gets it if we can. But needs are socially relative, and in our society they comprise not only the basics of biological life but also education, culture, a home, and sufficient income and resources to be able to live a meaningful life with others in a social context. We should therefore treat the demand for a decent standard of living with the same urgency as we accord to the imperatives of survival." By itself, this argument is unlikely to convince anyone who does not already believe in social provision for education, etc. It seeks to transfer the moral force of needs which are related to survival over on to needs which are not, by a sort of persuasive definition, without addressing the question of why we should be expected to hold that moral force constant in the face of what the argument itself admits is the drastic relativity of the content of need.

In fact, needs are relative in at least two senses. Historically, which claims of need taken seriously changes over time and from society to society. For example, until recent religious consolation at death was taken to something that everyone needed; but Humanism illustrates a modern tendency to do without it. We cannot assume that progress nor can we say how this "need" will be viewed in the future. The change in need over time is neither linear nor predictable. Fanetich points out, "we may yet encounter

death and suffering in ways that are as unimaginable to us now as Hume's death was to Boswell." Second, needs are relative to ends—consider how the cognate term "necessary" evokes the question "Necessary for what?"

Faced with these two relativities, it is tempting to say that the second explains the first—that the historical development of needs is nothing more than the adoption of new aims and ideals, and a change in the circumstances and constraints under which we are able to pursue them. It is also tempting to say that the second relativity accounts for whatever moral force attaches to claims of need. X's need for Y compels concern just to the extent that we are concerned that X should be able to reach goal Z for which Y is a necessary condition. As so often in morality, the moral character of the end dictates the light in which we view the means said to be necessary for its pursuit.

But though something like this is true, it is not the full story. The urgency that is attached to talk of needs in political morality is not fully captured by the urgency of the aims to which they are relative. "Need" in politics narrows down the field of human claims in a way that "necessary for" does not. To begin with, talk of a person's needs carries with it a connotation of urgency in the demand, despair in its non-fulfillment, and a relief in its satisfaction comparable to that felt when intense pain ceases. Part of our response to need is a response to these feelings: it is a concern to put an end to *needing* as much as a concern to supply the means to some valued end. This may not always be so; we also talk of "objective" needs in ways which a person has though he does not experience them as such. But as Ignatieff notes, such talk is fraught with difficulty: "There are few presumptions in human relations more dangerous than the idea that one knows what another human needs better than they do themselves."

Second, "need" in politics connotes a certain *inescapability* which chosen aims and their tennis. But giving up the aim of survival is not so easy, even if I cannot find any food. What is interesting is how this inescapability becomes a characteristic of some purely social needs as well. If I cannot get the clothes that I need to look tidy, or the access to a television or newspaper that I need to find out what is going on, I cannot easily give up looking tidy or being well-informed. Certainly, these aims are not intrinsic to our nature; men and women in other societies get by perfectly well without them. But once established, they are capable of becoming such central points of reference in our dealings with others that a person can be made to feel socially crippled if he is unable to achieve them. If he tries to spurn them, he pays the price of a marginal social existence, of alienation from others. Many people do have to live on that margin, and have the greatest difficulty in being taken seriously, in being socially recognized, by neighbours, potential employers, policemen, bankers, bureaucrats and other strangers with whom they have to deal.

A third point about social and natural needs is more difficult to state, and it takes us to Ignatieff's discussion of tragedy. Do needs create entitlements? Oddly, it is easier to say "Yes" in the case of socially defined needs than in the case of natural needs, because the former are often defined in terms of a set of roles, understandings and obligations which also define the conditions for their satisfaction. A citizen needs to be literate in order to be able to vote, and a democratic society will take it for granted that an elementary education ought to be provided. There is a foothold in the social structure defining the need, on which the demand for its satisfaction can get a grip. Le needs his retinue of one hundred knights in order to be king, and his daughters will naturally accommodate him as long as they have respect for his regal status. But the lesson *King Lear* is that when that respect crumbles when the structure and trust which bind need and entitlement together disintegrate, we are left with nothing but individuals who have power facing individuals who do not. "The nightmare of the powerless is that one day they will make their claim, and the powerful will demand a reason, one day the look of entre-

will be met with the unknowing stare of force." Paradoxically, then, the most pressing needs of all – the biological necessities of "poor, bare, unaccommodated man" – may have the most tenuous grip on obligation and entitlement. So long as we live in society, they will be bound up with other social obligations and the demand for their satisfaction will have the character of a recognized social claim. But out "on the heath", as Ignatieff calls it, outside our little zone of safety in the developed world, in the exploding shanty towns and encroaching deserts of Asia and Africa, or inside it, in "the vast grey space of state confinement", there is precious little besides our common membership of a biological species to hold us together. Here, the claim of need becomes simply the plea that because one is human one deserves to live. Our cruel and murderous experience of what happens when humans confront one another on these terms indicates, as Ignatieff puts it, that this is one of the weakest claims that one person can make to another.

It is easy for this position to be exaggerated. The experience of the Ethiopian famine has shown that people do respond, however halfheartedly and hypocritically, to an image of the pressing necessity of others on the health with whom they have no social relations at all. If there is in human nature, as Rousseau puts it, an "innate repugnance at seeing a fellow creature suffer", Ignatieff's analysis fails to recognize or explore the basis of that residual sympathy among human beings. Nevertheless it provides a challenging contrast to the view, put about by Ivan Illich and others, that we would live in a more caring world if only people could deal with one another face to face unmediated by social roles or institutions.

From the contrast between the social and the natural in human needing, Ignatieff turns to the relation between the flesh and the spirit. The traditional Christian assumption has been that a life devoted to the world and the flesh would reveal its inadequacy in the transfiguration:

The perplexing fact about lives given over to the satisfaction of ordinary material needs is that they seem capable of generating their own self-validation. The simplest pleasure has the capacity to produce more genuine assurance of the reality of existence than many a tortured chain of reasoning about God's ultimate purpose for mankind. . . . [The] great enemy of religion is not science, not the active profession of unbelief, but the silent and pervasive plausibility of earthly need as a metaphysics of ordinary life. . . . the desires and needs of the body, human life, . . . find all its justification. . . . In hunger appeased, thirst slaked, resentment gratified, pity displayed and sexual desire satiated, sensation consecrated the chase, validates all toll.

It is easy enough to say, gloomily, that the vision of such a life represents the death of the human spirit and the triumph of material aspiration in capitalist society. Ignatieff rightly rejects this life as premature – “a loss of nerve” in the face of an admitted decline of collective certainty about the meaning of life. He takes from Augustine the point that a commitment to the needs of the spirit need not involve any repudiation of the flesh. In *The City of God* we are presented with “a vision of the sinless joys of the body that await man’s restoration to Paradise”. The spirit promises not a transcendence of the flesh, but a control, a wholeness of self, and an untroubled calmness in bodily gratification that is lacking in the reactive subservience of mere passion. Now this Augustinian model of the relation between spirit and flesh can be abstracted from its theological context. We may find secular analogues of Augustine’s spiritual satisfaction, not in the life of self-denial or ascetic contemplation, but in such things as the liberal ideal of autonomy properly understood, or the Freudian need for an *exhorted* life, where desire is neither repudiated nor taken for granted, but scrutinized and adopted to the extent that it fits with a coherent conception of what one’s life means.

The truth, then, of the needs of the spirit—that total immersion, the loss of self, in material fulfillment is not enough for human beings. For example, David Hume dines, plays backgammon and is merry with his friends; and his philosophical speculations "appear cold and strained and ridiculous that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them."

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further". Nevertheless he does return to his speculations and on his deathbed it is in philosophy, not backgammon, that he locates the worth of his life. Again, we see Hume facing death with Stoic self-command, repudiating the spiritual consolations that Boswell urges on him. Yet on his own account in his work on "natural religion", such self-command is not generally to be expected in mankind, for man is an animal unreconciled to the needs of his nature and cursed with the capacity to distance himself from them in thought and to try and "make them bearable by compassing them in meaning, in the language of Providence, or the mythology of original sin". Yet again, with Adam Smith, Hume finds in mundane need ("hunger, thirst, and the passion for sex") a secular basis for social order and a motor for economic and historical progress that his predecessors had found only in an ethic "grounded in the idea that we owe an account of the stewardship of our lives to our Master". But both thinkers recognized that a society built on this basis still requires at the very least a common language of need for its members, one that must arise out of reflection on our natures, rather than individual immersion in material desire.

This account of the needs of the spirit is the widest-ranging of Ignatieff's meditations, and can be regarded as the centre of gravity of the book as a whole. The technique of meditative evocation rather than linear argument makes it difficult sometimes to catch his drift and to see where his explorations are taking him. As it moves from Augustine to Marx, from prelapsarian sex to political economy, the discussion is held together only by the author's determination not to be enticed away by familiar platitudes from the honesty of his initial insight that the worth of life is expressed in the first instance always "in the unmistakable coinage of sensation". For my money, that establishes his *bona fides* in an area of discussion too often distinguished by pedantry and cant.

Towards the end of the book, two further themes emerge: belonging and modernity. The need to belong and the special plight of the refugee have already been touched on in the argument about social and natural needs. If our claims against one another are strongest in systems of social obligation that bind needs and entitlements together, and weakest on the heath where the rights of man are so many words in the wind, then the need for ties of family, community, and a state of one's own takes on the urgency and in the case of national liberation movements the "murderous intensity" of the most compelling human aspiration. But there is also a deeper, non-instrumental significance in the need to belong. Though we value individual freedom we do not normally feel that it amounts to much if exercised in isolation from the understanding and recognition of others. We need the backdrop of a common culture, ethics and historical



"Bradford 1978", reproduced from volume seven in "The Great Photographers" series, Donald McCullin by Mark Haworth Booth (62pp with 48 pages of black-and-white plates. Collins. £3.95. 0004119353).

Going to the bad

RONALD D. MILO
Immortality
274pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£24.70.
0691 066140
MARY MIDDLEY
Wickedness: A philosophical essay
224pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £14.95.
07100 9759X
JUDITH SHKLAR
Ordinary Vices
268pp. Harvard University Press. £13.20.
0675 641752

Like Stendhal, so he tells us, Nietzsche insisted, as a stylist, to be *sec*. It must be admitted that he reached *debut-sec* at best; for a degree of dryness surpassing even *brut*, one must look to those who have written on moral issues under the rhetorical imperatives of analytical philosophy. So concerned have these authors been never to be suspected of edificatory intentions that one could not deduce from their examples that misconduct ever gets much worse than rudeness, or that moral weakness leads to negligences worse than not brushing one's teeth or, at the very worst, to excesses beyond helping oneself to an unfairly large portion of dessert at high table. I have often thought that were the corpus of contemporary moral philosophy all that remained as literary evidence for the life of our era, archaeologists of the future would enviously conclude that we had lived in a golden age.

This assessment would be reinforced by the predilection for amusing but imaginary cases, as though the larger moral issues had all been resolved, leaving as exercises for moral philosophy only abstract problems in remote possible worlds. So one may properly wonder whether there has not been some underlying shift in philosophical sensibility when three books appear at nearly the same time, the concatenated titles of which—*Wickedness*, *Immortality*, and *Ordinary Vices*—seem to define a core curriculum for those curious to learn

the usual arenas of Anglo-American moral theory—the garden party, say, or the dinner-table. Can it be, Nietzsche would ask in his unmistakably *liquoreux* way, that philosophers are learning at last what we human-all-too-humans knew all along?

The title of Ronald D. Milo's subtle and systematic book is perhaps misleadingly incendiary, inasmuch as his concern is more—to use his distinction—with moral wrongness than moral *badness*, which is where immortality would seem to begin, and his main aim seems to be to typologize the modes of moral wrongness more adequately to our concept of it than Aristotle succeeded in doing. Aristotle allowed just two possibilities: "wickedness", where one acts on wrong principles thinking them right, and which is therefore a cognitive defect; and "weakness", where one acts wrongly notwithstanding one's knowledge of what right principles command. Socrates had allowed only wickedness; famously holding that men act wickedly only through ignorance; but moral weakness or *akrasia* was recognized by Plato, as indeed by Euthyphides, whose *Medea* was written in refutation of Socrates' bold thesis. Professor Milo goes considerably beyond anything allowed in theory by the ancients, proposing three sources of moral wrongness: bad values believed by an agent to be good (*perverse wickedness*) or acknowledged as bad but acted on anyway since the agent prefers some end more than that of avoiding wrong-doing (*preferential wickedness*); lack of concern for others, either by not making moral judgments at all (*amoralism*), or making them but not letting that interfere with one's actions (*moral indifference*); and finally lack of rational self-control, which subdivides as *moral negligence* and *moral weakness*, depending upon whether emotions distort one's judgment, or, leaving one's judgment unaffected, nevertheless keep one from doing the right thing. To each of these he devotes a careful chapter.

It seems to me that each dimension of moral failure might be exemplified through the standardly tepid or exotic cases contemporary moral

philosophy standardly deals in, so something else is needed to carry us to the boundaries of true wickedness. Milo insists that he is not writing a system of ethics, where perhaps the distinction between wrongness and badness properly belongs, and so it may be unreachable from the widened platform of meta-ethical analysis he has given us, even if the latter may have some empirical fall-out and some ethical implications. So the reader will only by accident achieve much by way of homiletical insight from the refined taxonomies. At one point, for example, we are offered the thesis that lack of moral concern may be "the single, ultimate source of all immoral behaviour". This sounds as though indifference were the *summum malum*, which it may be. But more than meta-ethics is wanted to show why it should be the ultimate evil, if it is that: Milo's interest merely lies in showing it to be more basic than the other distinctions, in the sense that they may be reduced to it. This is the reverse of those ancient queries as to whether the cardinal virtues may not be reduced to one, and the book remains well within the standard preoccupations of analytical moral inquiry.

As much must be said of Mary Midgley's stridently titled and more roughly composed essay, less concerned with identifying evil than with ruling out certain explanations of its existence—as God's fault for not having made us better, or society's fault for having framed us as we are. Wickedness does not figure largely in the text—there is no entry for it in the otherwise adequate index—and my sense is that the title was an afterthought to what seems like a hastily compiled discussion of motives and the conflict of motives. Midgley calls for rather more subtlety in the analyses of moral psychology than she anywhere displays herself, her chief target being the view that moral badness is a matter of pursuing one's own interest, whatever the cost to others, which is preferential wickedness in Milo's scheme. More is involved in immorality than egoism, more even than the perversion of natural desires, since even natural unperturbed desires, conflict morally being a mechanism for harmonization. Since, as she contends, the initial desires

Words like fraternity, belonging, and community are so soaked with nostalgia that they are nearly useless as guides to the real possibilities of solidarity in modern society. Modern life has changed the possibilities of civic solidarity, and our language stumbles behind

like an overburdened porter with a mountain of old cases.

No doubt Ignatieff exaggerates when he warns that a need can die altogether for want of linguistic expression. If that were literally true, there would be no problem. The worry is that we are haunted by a living but *unarticulated* need, and that, until we find words for it, we will be unable to pursue any credible social strategy for its satisfaction.

The suggestion in the final pages of the book is that we should turn for such a language to the art and literature of modernity. Drawing heavily on Marshall Berman's work, *All That Is Solid Melts Into The Air*, Ignatieff writes of "the proximity of loneliness and happiness" and the dialectic of rootlessness and belonging, which can be found in modern cities—in their boulevards, bars and diners. Laments about the alienation and transience of modern life are dismissed as easy options; they would be helpful only if there were a real possibility of a return to stable and homely forms of solidarity. The author's own suggestions are tantalizingly brief but, based as they are on the premise that that possibility does not exist, they express an optimism that there is still somewhere to look for a sense of belonging adequate to the restless joys and fleeting contact of the society of strangers in our cities.

With its 154 pages, *The Needs of Strangers* must be one of the shortest books ever published on human needs. It can easily be read in an evening. But the learning that underlies it and the reflections it provokes are worth more time than that. It is not a book that argues cogently to any conclusions. Though there are themes I have not mentioned, none of them is followed through with any greater rigour than the lines of argument I have indicated. But I do not think that is a fault, and I hope that *The Needs of Strangers* will be the starting point for a wider and more mature discussion of the social problem of need than we have had up till now.

impose limits on reconciliation, some degree of evil may be unavoidable. Midgley really is a moralist by temperament, if an analyst by persuasion, and the book seems an uneasy compromise between impulses too held in check by one another to have allowed a very penetrating study: perhaps the book illustrates what it is about.

Montaigne is the hero of Judith Shklar's book, and in a way her model, for these are essays much in the manner of Montaigne, on the ordinary vices he identified: cruelty, hypocrisy, snobbery, betrayal and misanthropy. As suits a proprietor at Château d'Yquem, Montaigne had no special concern to be *sec*, and he expresses repugnance and enthusiasm freely, just as Professor Shklar herself does in what she describes as "a tour of perplexities, not a guide for the perplexed". I saw an earlier version of the initial essay, "Putting Cruelty First", and I greatly admired her observation that cruelty, the worst of vices, is scarcely to be found much discussed in the pages of traditional moral philosophy—evidently in this respect not to be preferred to the recent kind—and is not counted in the standard inventory of viciousness. I looked into Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* to see if this could be true. Under "Cruelty" the reference work directed us only to look under "inhumanity", where I found chiefly a discussion of cruelty to animals, as though it were not to be found in our relations with one another.

We need a Foucault to archaeologize an absence—of discussion of cruelty—which may be the most interesting fact in the history of moral thought. Shklar's treatment of it is the best of her essays, but like them, and in the nature of "tours", it wanders in and out of literature and politics, following the pen, as it were. These are civilized excursions, literate and sensitive, and I cherish the book for its effort to move in out of the metaphorical and into the heart of darkness. Once we acknowledge the ordinariness of ordinary vices, the banality of normal badness, we may find ourselves not so distant from the moral monsters of human history who may simply be us, writ large.

Sieur Rodin's victim

Rosemary Dinnage

REINE-MARIE PARIS
Camille Claudel 1864-1943
383pp. Paris: Gallimard. 330 fr.
2070110753

The life of Camille Claudel, as told in this beautifully produced French book, makes an appalling story. She was born into a bourgeois French family in 1864, sister of Paul Claudel the writer, who compared the family atmosphere to that of *Wuthering Heights*. Her mother, as was only too clearly shown later on, disliked her, and her ambition to sculpt was frowned on. A photograph of her at twenty shows a handsome dark girl with a stubborn lift of the chin.

The life-story is based on meagre materials, for everything about her fell into a tragic obscurity even while she was still living; important letters, such as those to her father and to Rodin, are missing. Of her sculpture, everything she produced after 1905 was destroyed by her own hand, and what exists is mainly dispersed in private collections and obscure provincial galleries. The biography is filled out by an article on her work (dated 1905) by her brother, an essay on her relation to Paul Claudel's writing by Bernard Howells of King's College, London, an assessment by two psychiatrists, and a catalogue, list of exhibitions and bibliography. The author is Paul Claudel's granddaughter.

Against family opposition Camille Claudel did receive some tuition, from the sculptor Alfred Boucher, and left home to share a studio with other art students. When Boucher went to study in Italy he handed over his classes to Auguste Rodin, then in his forties and not yet the great celebrity he was to become. It was Camille Claudel's association with Rodin that was to bring about all the success and tragedy of her life.

Although she was his mistress for some dozen years, it is not just the story of a broken love affair. As the illustrations show, her fine and sensitive work is remarkably like Rodin's, and the question of who plagiarized whom was to become of sinister importance. She was in fact working in this style before she ever met Rodin. When she presented examples of her

work to the head of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he asked her if she had been taking lessons from Monsieur Rodin. At that time she had never heard of him.

Through her twenties and early thirties she was most closely associated with Rodin as model, lover and pupil, and he undoubtedly helped her career greatly. They exhibited together and he introduced her to a circle of artists and writers. He was the established artist, she the disciple. Whether he also learnt from her and whether she did work that was passed off with his signature can never be finally decided, but it was at the core of the persecutory beliefs that led to her imprisonment as a mental patient.

Rodin was a famous—or infamous—pursuer of women, but the long liaison with Claudel was in a different class from his transitory amours. While he was with her he did some of his best work. There was yet another woman in the background, however, the mistress who had been an unmarried wife to him since he was young and unknown. She was extremely jealous of Camille; Rodin, though, was unwilling to jettison his first and faithful companion.

There were rumours at the time that Camille Claudel had a child or an abortion or both. When the relationship broke up, she withdrew into eccentricity and solitude. There is a striking parallel here with the life of Gwen John, who was also model and mistress of Rodin as well as a brilliant artist. Her turn came later, when Rodin was elderly, but she was broken by the ending of the affair and lived in a more and more reclusive fashion, devout, surrounded by cats, working obsessively. Fortunately Gwen John had no family in France to put her in an asylum.

From the time of the break, Camille Claudel's life took a downward direction; as Rodin rose, she sank. She was short of money for materials, and was difficult about exhibitions. Her family, in particular her mother, was estranged from her and ashamed of her "immoral life". Ugly, queer, jealous, persecuted, complex about "Sieur Rodin" and his supposed gang of accomplices who were out to plagiarize and rob her. Eventually she broke up with hammers all the work she had done since 1905 and had the fragments taken away and buried.

On the track of TG

Graham Reynolds

ADRIENNE CORRI
The Search for Gainsborough
278pp. Cape. £8.95.
0224 021621

Pursuit by fanatics is an occupational hazard in any art gallery. It seems as though behind every portrait of "Ignoto" by "Anonimo" there is an owner who is convinced that it is of Shakespeare by Tintoretto—though never of plain Mr Smith by plain Mr Brown. Such unshakeable beliefs can go with normality in other aspects of life; even Mr Dijk was thought by Betsey Trotwood to have exceptional mental resources in spite of his King Charles's head. Obsessions about authorship are frequently supported by the detection of secret or concealed signatures. A collector of the 1930s was sure that all his drawings of male nudes were by Michelangelo because the genitals always spelt out the monogram M.

Adrienne Corri's *The Search for Gainsborough* is the case-history of one such obsession. It recounts her six-year battle to establish that a painting in the Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, is of Garrick and by the young Gainsborough. Her inquiry follows the classic course: the "signature" T G is found on the canvas and matched with one in the V&A which is certainly a figment of the imagination. It is puzzling to find that the amateur art-historian is always desperately anxious to get the professional to agree with him, yet treats any measure of disagreement with utter contempt. The relentless pressure on the officials of national museums to abjure their beliefs is exemplified by Miss Corri's record of her activi-

ties. The Director of the National Portrait Gallery has to reply to six letters in one year alone, though he can only repeat the opinion he first formed after careful consideration. In extreme cases it may be necessary to leave the country for protracted periods; how well we can understand the feelings of Sir Ellis Waterhouse as he writes that he is just leaving for Los Angeles and that no mail will be forwarded.

Miss Corri relates her remorseless investigation in detail and in a highly entertaining manner: her lively powers of description suggest that she has a promising future as a novelist. She is especially good on the gossip-colourist's world of mink coats, Jean Muir dresses and champagne. I enjoyed her reports of the rehearsals of *Keen* and similar stage events; but perhaps others with more inside knowledge of the theatre will find these as misleading as I do her accounts of the art world. Indeed she has already embarked on her career as a fiction writer in her assessments of museums and their staff. Her good angels are Arthur Lucas, Sir Hugh Casson, Lord Olivier, Tom Keating; these agree with her or urge her back into the fray. "Do you want me to twist John Hayes' arm again?" asks 'Sir Hugh. Posterity may think that the adverse opinions, based on long and varied experience, of Sir Oliver Miller, John Hayes, Malcolm Cormack, John Kerslake, John Ingamells are more worthy of consideration. Only Waterhouse, no doubt wearying of the chase, writes a carefully worded letter which, though it would not persuade a Board of Trustees to sanction a purchase, is sufficiently ambiguous for the author to be able to savour with Casson the feeling of "Victory at last".

To be fair, just as the alchemists stumbled on some aspects of modern chemistry in their

In 1913, when she was forty-eight, reality confirmed her most paranoid fantasies; she was taken by force from her studio and put in an asylum. She had been living in chaos and dirt, keeping the blinds closed and only venturing out rarely at night. It was perhaps understandable that her family should want to see her under the care of doctors for a time. But she stayed in the asylum for the rest of her life—no less than thirty years.

Letters that she wrote to family and friends begging for release are included here, and make indescribably pitiful reading. They are also completely lucid. Reports from the hospital are included as well and evidently she did continue to have persecutory ideas about food and about Rodin's "gang"; it was Rodin, she had to think, who had had her put away, for how could her family do such a thing? It is clear that she was no danger at all to herself or to others, however, and at intervals her doctors suggested that she be discharged. Her mother refused point-blank:

Je ne veux à aucun prix la relâcher de chez vous... Jamais, jamais. J'ai 75 ans, je ne puis me charger d'une fille qui a les idées les plus extravagantes, qui est remplie de mauvaises intentions à notre égard, qui nous déteste et qui est toute prête à nous faire tout le mal qu'elle pourra... Enfin elle a tous les vices, je ne veux pas la revoir, elle nous a fait trop de mal.

Persecutory ideas seem to have been as much the mother's as the daughter's. During her whole life of incarceration neither mother nor sister ever visited her.

If restitution can be made to Camille Claudel, this book does make it, and the fine photographs of her work display its calibre. Reine-Marie Paris makes it clear that Camille Claudel's obsession with the idea that Rodin had plagiarized from her was not, in a sense, delusory; she had offered herself and her gifts freely to him and there was no getting them back. She was both his muse and right hand for years, and there was something in her own way of sculpting that showed him the way he should go himself. The author, though, is not entirely fair: although she was working intensely hard, ironically, some of her works are housed in the Rodin museum, though after the break she refused to appear in the same exhibitions with him. They should be placed somewhere where they can have a life of their own.

search for the philosopher's stone, Miss Corri has found new facts about Gainsborough from her diligent study of eighteenth-century bank accounts. But it is necessary to be wary of research which is directed towards establishing an already formed hypothesis; it is presented differently from the results of an impartial attempt to find the truth, whatever it may be. Her discoveries do not prove her case.

Unless the painting in question enters a public collection the future reader will have the greatest difficulty in forming his own opinion on the dispute. This book makes publishing history by not containing a single plate illustrating the picture which is its topic, still less any related material. The only reproduction is on the dust jacket, which is designed to be ephemeral. Weighing its vitality against its defects, my view of her book is summed up in Miss Corri's description of a hotel which did not meet her standards: "Terrible: I rather like it".

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The spirit's shell

Robert Snell

AUGUSTE RODIN
Art: Conversations with Paul Gsell
Translated by Jacques de Caso and Patricia B. Sanders
130pp. University of California Press. £13.80.
0520038193

Towards the end of his life, at the height of his international fame, Rodin put his name to a number of interviews with the journalist Paul Gsell, which were published in book form in 1911 under the title *L'Art*. This series of Socratic dialogues achieved immense and immediate success, an English translation appearing in 1912; it is by far the most important statement of Rodin's thought and an indispensable source for Rodin scholars.

This is a new translation, well illustrated and superlatively footnoted and indexed. It is certainly more faithful than its only predecessor, by Mrs Romilly Fadden, which somehow managed both to edit and to be more long-winded than the original. Next to nothing is known about the precise terms of the collaboration between Rodin and Gsell; one is occasionally tempted to read the book as if it were fiction. Gsell often seems to be carried away by his own rhetoric, and a number of the ideas voiced are striking nineteenth-century commonplaces, their possible sources ranging from Balzac, Gautier or Amiel to (as de Caso suggests in his useful introduction) Bergson. (Later French editions contain a "Testament", signed by Rodin, which often seems even more tellingly Bergsonian.) The work of pin-pointing these sources and assessing the originality of Rodin/Gsell's ideas, embedded as they necessarily are in "the major intellectual themes of the time" (Symbolist spiritualism, late-nineteenth-century neo-classicism, another source now made available to us. Conceived in a journalistic form which was common at the period, the book is the work of a gifted popularizer, and conveys the supreme self-assurance of the artist and the consistency of his thought in a way that pushes worries about its literal veracity into the background.

Rodin expressed himself with authority on Nature and Realism, the role of intellect in art, the Old Masters, the social utility of the artist, and on women. He provides valuable insights into his working methods, his approach to the model in movement and his changing conceptions of drawing. He gives us background information on important commissions and offers illuminating observations on eighteenth and nineteenth-century French art, on Houdin and Rude, Watteau, Delacroix and Millet, all artists he admired. The book is one of the freshest attempts at explaining his craft that any successful modern artist has made. "The body always expresses the spirit for which it is the shell", Rodin said, and beautifully illustrates the depth of this insight in his conversation on Phidias and Michelangelo. We, however, need not only what Rodin has to tell us in this book, but also our own critical and historical wits, in order fully to comprehend the spirit behind his striding, crushing, crouching and dismembered bodies: to discern the extent to which Rodin's thought was embedded not merely in contemporary themes, but also in contemporary values.

Remainders

Eric Korn

Wot Xmas means to Me.
What Christmas means to me is Jumble Sales. These stand in relation to the rest of bookdealing as goldfish-swallowing contests do to gastronomy or as whatever-you-please (for example goldfish swallowing) does to normal sexual commerce.
There are people who do nothing else (I am speaking now of jumble sales): every Saturday to school, to church hall and synagogue hall (Sunday in the latter case), to drill hall and playcentre, to fire station and clinic annexe, for the purported benefit of Parent-Teachers, Choir, Seventeenth Acton Wolfcubs, The Society for the Preservation of Rural Bloodsports, The Campaign against Distressed Gentlefolk, they come, the obsessed, the deluded, the sportsmen, the gamblers, the eternal students, the monomaniac, the cavalier, the greedy, the hopeful, the lhopeless.
Each has his own strategies: the running swoop the length of the table, to reeve, with the grab on the backswing; the stand-pat-and-grab-on-it-all-towards-you; the seize it all and throw what you don't want over your left shoulder; the excuse-me-might-I-just-glance-at-that-gotcha. It would need an Alvarez to document the courtesies and hypocrisies, the fevers, the superstitions (this is my jumble sale hat, finds always go in threes, if I shut my eyes and reach . . .), the passions are not miniature or mimic, either: this is the real jungle and we play for keeps.
It's all very reprehensible, collecting in the raw, as gross a distortion of bibliography as treasure-hunting is of archaeology. Yes; and just as the most patient scholarly archaeologist, scraping soil out of post holes and counting millet-seeds for the light they cast on Beaker Folk social parameters, would, in his heart, rather be bulldozing through the strata with a magnetometer, looking for the mirror of Nefertiti or the Golden Cohort of Sennacherib, so inside every mild bibliophile . . .

... is the Father Advent, is the book-beasts' Full Moon, the Night of the Librarians. The brief December days are crammed with sales, and he plans his campaign with a stack of local papers, an A to Z and a wealth of experience (Canonbury Comprehensive gets a good class of parent . . . be in the line-up by nine . . . ten minutes and a taxi to Baling CND . . . Tower Hamlets Labour Party might have some chuckouts from the Maxton Memorial Library . . . Walthamstow Tories keep their best stuff for the summer fête, give it a miss . . . St Dominic's is mostly theology but I found a scarce C. S. Lewis . . . Wood Green Historical Society has a bookdealer on the committee, he won't leave anything behind). I know a man who puts on overalls to fossick among the pamphlets at the Morning Star Bazaar, for fear that the other fossickers (rigorous political-self-educators to a fossicker) will suss him out for a capitalist and tear him to shreds (but he keeps a tie in his pocket for the Golders Green SDP).
The other day, to ease my conscience a trifle, I was running the bookstall at a jumble sale, which, mostly means, adjudicating in fights, stopping market-stall dealers from coming in half-an-hour early and offering a tenner for the lot, and explaining, over and over again, that it is not the case that all books are sixpence. Around me maddened book-lovers seethed, and howled. The air was filled with their curses and the sound of ripping backstrips: ever and anon a slither of books would subside into the moraine along the floor. Midst all this tumult I was approached by a debutant and

confident figure from an earlier age. "Do you have", he asked, indicating, without seeing it, the carnage all about, "anything on Swedish Inland Waterways?"

It's peaceful here in NWS, quite often. But at this moment in time there are rather too many pheromones in the air for tranquillity. Pheromones are those stirring chemical signals that, in handy aerosol form, are offered in the small ads of the vulgar sort of journal, with gross sexist promises of mastery through pharmacology: "just a dab in each nostril and you'll have to scruple the birds off with a trowel", they proclaim, unregenerately. But these pheromones emanate from the female dog that shares my house, one of three more-than-Baskervillian hounds, one Russian and two Scots (Ivan, Ian and Iona as it might be) that we keep around in order to . . . I don't know why ex-actly, to keep the book population down, perhaps. She is enjoying her first season, a particularly unruly, romping débutante, too young yet for matrimony. The reason dogs don't write poetry, are in fact the most mundane beings in the world, is that they are not creatures of the moon. A canine Camilla would have to wear margarites, I mean a canine Marguerite Gautier would have to wear her red camellias 360-odd days of the year (though the parallel is not exact). With no cyclical moodiness to set their calendars, they try to cram an awful lot of living into a few days. For most of the year it's just bones and loyal pack-membership; then for about a week it's roses all the way, the red rose and the white, the red camellia and the white, the days of whine and roses, all emotion and no remembrance in tranquillity.

It takes her two suitors differently: the Borzoi has gone all Slav, fallen off his Obolomov-couch in a Dostoevskian ecstasy of self-abasement. There is a Pushkin poem - one which regularly reduces Soviet expatriates and doubtless patriates too to sodden sobs - about

loving her so much that I just wish her another lover as tender and devoted as me (me, presumably being about to piss off to the Casino for an evening of morose cards and shampans-koye, and a bullet through the head at dawn), that catches his state of mind fairly accurately.

The other hound, coarsely vigorous peasant type, chopper-down of cherry orchards, seems to have realized that he is to be the eventual lucky one, the chosen legatee, and passes the time with boisterous but not deeply heartfelt complaints. Muscovite whimpers counterpoint a grumbling pilroch (is this possible?), and there is a lot of heading off, shepherding about, and closing this door before we open that one, as though the house were a multicultural spaceship with any number of airlocks between the life-forms that breathe bromine and the ones that dissolve in it. And now the humans are being affected. Last night the hounds were outside, breathing resignation and lust and yearning and general dogginess into the still night when something resembling Ragnarök broke out, crashes and snarls and barks and breaking furniture.

Ventured to the window. An unfamiliar and belligerent voice challenged me to step into the garden. There, the voice's owner, who seemed in a state approaching melt-down, explained that while proceeding in a peaceable manner down the road he had been attacked, assaulted, nay molested by two ungovernable and rabid dogs, which had destroyed the very valuable property he was carrying, and in consequence he had, as anyone would, broken down my side door in order to make his way into the garden and strangle the dogs and possibly their proprietor, in lieu of compensation. I pointed out that the dogs could not have attacked him, as they were separated from the road by an eight-foot wall topped with wire. He accused me, picturesquely, of lack of imagination. The dogs had assaulted him verbally, causing him to drop his valuable groceries, and thereby provoking his need for vengeance.

I pointed out mildly, but with uncharacteris-

tic firmness (splendid things these pheromones) that breaking my door down, to say nothing of threatening to asphyxiate my dogs and my family, might be considered an unfriendly and even an illegal act. His reply surprised and flattered me. It was, approximately: "If you think that you are living in a clunking dream world. What do you do for a living, mate? You must be a clunking writer. Do you think you're Coldrich? Living in a clunking fantasy, like Samuel Taylor clunking Coldrich? You think you're in the clunking Company of Wolves, don't you?" And more of the same. As reinforcements for my side arrived, he evaporated. He went in fact like one that hath been stunned and is of sense forlorn, leaving behind him a curiously syllogistic non-threat ("I'm not afraid of any man, young or old, and you're neither") and the shards of his broken groceries, his Precious, a bottle of Porlock Pearmain Cider. We swept up the shards, surveyed the streets for him in vain, and dispersed the audience. "It's good round here", said one of them, "last time I was here they had a snake." This was especially gratifying, as I was beginning to think that the snake was a false memory, something I had invented for a Remainders column a few years ago. But I invent nothing . . .

Assistant Professor Keelhauler: Our writer is here wittily attempting to validate one of his fictions or fictions (the snake) by reference to another of his narrative creations (this very ad hoc bystander). While this of course sheds no light on the ultimate veridicality of the experience outside the authorial frame of reference, he is surely making an ironic comment on the whole narrative process, and in having this irony pointed out by yet another literary construct (Assistant Professor Keelhauler) who am also a fictional figment or factual figment, does he not thereby seek to invalidate the invalidation and thereby revalidate the validation? (Dawn breaks. Freeze frame. The twanging of a string.)

Letters and MSS

(£1,760). Swift too was in reminiscent mood as he wrote a four-page letter dated November 4, 1732, to Lady Worsley from Dublin, recalling among other things his flirtation with Martha Blount and describing himself as "Banished to a country of slaves and beggars; my blood soured, my Spirits sunk, fighting with Beasts like St. Paul . . . God be thanked that I have no flock at all, so that I neither can corrupt nor be corrupted . . ." (£5,500 to Quaritch).

"In some moods I prefer Brigadier Gerard to Holmes", Graham Greene wrote in his preface to Green and Gibson's *A Bibliography of Conan Doyle* (1983). Here was the twenty-one page autograph manuscript of a rattling story, "How the Brigadier Rode to Minsk", with revisions and alterations and its original title "How Brigadier Gerard broke his Parole" deleted. The property of the author's daughter Dame Jean Conan Doyle, it was sold to Rose for £5,720. A revealing unpublished series of some thirty letters by John Masfield to his god-mother, Ann Hanford-Flood, written between 1900 and 1937, was acquired for £1,760 by Quaritch, who also purchased a series of twenty-nine letters, 1926-29, from David Jones to Douglas Cleverdon, about their collaboration on *The Rime of the Ancient Minner* (1929), for £4,400 and seven further letters by Jones to Cleverdon, principally discussing the 1955 broadcast of *In Parenthesis*, for £1,485. Other interesting David Jones material, drafts of Cleverdon's catalogue for the National Book League heavily annotated by Jones, were bought by Sheetz for £5,280.

Books and letters from the library of John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield were sold by the Trust. Katherine Mansfield's copy of the first English edition of D. H. Lawrence's *Aaron's Rod* (1922) in which she had pencilled her opinion of the work, was purchased for £770 by Stransky who also bought for £1,210 her copy of the first trade edition of *Women in Love* (1921), annotated by Murry ("This is Katherine's experience . . . This is like Katherine"). Among Mansfield's own works, a first edition of her first book, *In a German Pension* (1913), Murry's copy of the

book which originally attracted him to her, was acquired by Sumner and Stilman for £550 while Blackwell's paid £308 for the first edition of her *Poems* (1923) inscribed by Murry to Dorothy Brett, and £385 for the first edition of *Prelude* (1918) by the Hogarth Press. A collection of Murry's manuscripts and typescripts sold for £1,320 to Wakefield, who paid the same price for some 250 letters by various correspondents to Murry, while Gekowsky acquired for £1,870 180 letters from Henry Williamson to Murry written between 1942 and 46.

T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926) in the first limited edition is now inevitably an expensive book; this copy, with additional material including a specimen sheet of the first draft and rough proofs of the first seven chapters, sold for £13,000 to Ryan. Among objects of literary association, Oscar Wilde's copy of Pater's *Imaginary Portraits*, which he had with him in Reading Gaol, was sold for £3,850 to Fleming. Julia Duckworth's photograph album (from which a knowing hand had abstracted the work of her aunt, Julia Margaret Cameron) was full of photographs of the Stephens and sold for £3,740 to Rota.

The second session, held on December 7, was devoted to English history and included an important book from the library of Archbishop Cranmer, Jacques Merlin's edition of *Quatuor concilium generarium* (1524), was devoted to English history and included an important book from the library of Archbishop Cranmer, Jacques Merlin's edition of *Quatuor concilium generarium* (1524), was sold for £23,100 to Sawyer. Cranmer's library was confiscated by Queen Mary on his imprisonment in 1553; the bulk of it being then appropriated by her High Steward, Henry Fitzalan, twelfth Earl of Arundel, and passing subsequently to his son-in-law, John, Lord Lumley. On Lumley's death in 1609 a large number of his books were bought by James I and are now, by gift of George III, in the King's Library at the British Museum. Cranmer wrote two treatises on General Councils, no doubt using this book as source material; clusters of annotations are to be found on pages relating to certain Councils and papal decrees and there are no less than ten references to matrimonial questions.

Letters

The Democrats and the Left

Sir, - May I take a little of your space to protest against the fashionable misinterpretation of the American election served up in the *TLS* by Phillip Whitehead in his review (November 9) of Max Atkinson's *Our Masters' Voices* and Edwin Diamond and Stephen Bates's *The Spoil*? It did not hurt Ronald Reagan at the polls this year, or in 1980, to have the knack of making a good impression on television, any more than it hurt Franklin Delano Roosevelt to have the knack of making a good impression on the radio. But to suppose this knack was the sole secret of Reagan's success is as politically ridiculous as supposing Roosevelt's knack was the sole secret of his success.

If President Reagan had run in 1982, before better times came, he almost certainly would have been beaten. As to 1984, if Mr Whitehead is seriously interested in identifying the Grand Electors of President Reagan, he will soon discover them in the present left wing of the Democratic Party. By their defection in 1968, the left-wing Democrats began their brilliant career by serving as the Grand Electors of Richard M. Nixon. And by choosing George McGovern as their party's candidate in 1972, they again made it certain that Nixon would score a tremendous victory - although this victory was later spoiled by his own folly.

Since then, the left-wing Democrats have completed the job of driving out the South. Note here that the South's ancient Democratic loyalty was not seriously shaken by the great Voting Rights Act, after which a civilized, healthy, bi-racial Southern Democratic party was duly taking shape in a most promising way. The South's decisive and total departure has, in fact, been quite recent. And it is owed to the fact that after the Voting Rights Act had been passed and accepted in the South, the left-wing Democrats rather promptly began what has positively seemed a careful, intentional search for every other issue that would most infuriate moderate and public opinion.

In addition, the left-wing Democrats have quite largely driven out of the party the Catholic groups the politicians unpleasantly call "the ethnics". In the last election, the same clamorous people further surrendered the entire centre to Reagan and the Republicans, to the extent that Walter Mondale was driven (by his poll-takers) to swallow almost every word said at the San Francisco convention about defence and foreign policy, when he appeared with Reagan in the second television debate.

The percentages of persons in most of the former Democratic voting groups who now prefer the Republicans are, in fact, downright frightening for anyone who wants to see a revived Democratic Party of the sort that succeeded so well in the happier days of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman and John F. Kennedy. Because this is what I want, I may perhaps sound testy.

JOSEPH ALSOP.
2806 N Street NW, Washington, DC 20007.

'Making of a Moonie'

Sir, - In his informative review of Eileen Barker's book, *The Making of a Moonie* (November 9), Anthony Burgess refers, not without some sympathy, to the sect's activities and asks "why, then, the truculence of the opposition?" I think there is a more obvious and political answer than the one hit on by Burgess, which is simply "the disruption of families, young people running away from home". Whatever we may think of Moonie's theology, which as a co-religionist of Mr Burgess I find more than a little eccentric, the fact is that his religion is clearly and overtly anti-Communist, and that a belief that the United States is the final, divinely chosen bastion of resistance to totalitarianism, is an integral part of his theology. Since this belief, and anti-Communism, automatically arouse the ire and resentment of the majority of opinion-makers and shapers in the predominantly left-liberal American media and political culture, their attitude to Moonie is entirely explicable on political grounds.

The perception that the extremely negative public image of Moonism has less to do with the actual tenets and practices of the sect than with the political bias of those who form the

image is reinforced by the surprisingly broad range of institutions and groups, including some traditionally quite liberal ones, who provided *amicus* briefs in support of Moon's application to appeal against his conviction for tax evasion to the Supreme Court (the application was denied). The feeling was that the Government's case, which ostensibly rested on the mere fact of non-payment of tax on income from interest on money held by Moon, but used for Unification Church purposes, was actually vitiated by a prejudicial assumption on the part of the judge that the sect was not a respectable religion, and that its leader therefore did not merit the same treatment as, say, a Catholic bishop, who may traditionally hold Church funds or property in his own name without thereby being liable for personal or corporate tax.

DAVID GRESS.
Hoover Institution, Stanford, CA 94305.

The Essence of Swissness

Sir, - George Steiner in his article "What is 'Swiss'?" (December 7) makes the statement: "The truly great ones are either imported (Calvin, Nietzsche, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann) or leave in bitterness (Rousseau, Klees)." According to literary and artistic taste we may add or strike off a name here and there (why not Nabokov, why not Rilke in the first group, why not Le Corbusier in the "leavers"?)

But the point I want to make is of a different order: in the troubled years before the last war, and more so during the war years, "imported", ie admitted by the Swiss bureaucrats, were celebrities with bank accounts or, failing that, with benefactors in the wings. If you had neither a bank account nor a benefactor and had the misfortune to be unknown to the immigration officers (*Fremdenpolizei*) or the public at large, you might just make it, but you might have to sign a declaration "not to exercise your profession as a poet", as happened to Else German poets of this century. This seems, at least to one reader, to encapsulate what is most Swiss: philistine self-interest and complete lack of a sense of the ridiculous.

WILLIAM SHOTT.
Flat 3, 6 Rushton Crescent, Bournemouth.

Sir, - How often, after a holiday in the French or Italian Alps, I have been irritated by friends inquiring "Did you have a good time in Switzerland?" I am sorry that you too fall for the erroneous equation "Alps = Switzerland; Switzerland = Alps", and mar the otherwise welcome Swiss number by the cover picture which shows climbers on the French side of Mont Blanc, whose other side is in Italy. There is no shortage of mountain pictures to do justice to The Essence of Swissness - not the

FIFTY YEARS ON

The *TLS* of December 20, 1934, carried a review of David Cecil's *Early Victorian Novelists* of which the following is an extract:

If it be decided, after prolonged study, that the point not to be forgotten about Dickens is that he was uneducated and was not an "intellectual", and that the point not to be forgotten about George Eliot is that she was educated and was an "intellectual", but that Dickens is among the greatest of novelists while George Eliot is on a lower plane, what have we done but taken some tall, good-looking words for a circular walk? A very pleasant walk, indeed, if it be through a Victorian landscape with Lord David Cecil as companion. He talks charmingly, and is as familiar with the high roads and the private paths and the characters encountered as, to use a homely simile of Oliver Wendell as, to use, a stable boy is with his horses. But Holmes's, a stable boy is with his horses. But we do feel we have hardly seen the country for the personalities we have met: that we could have taken in their proportions rather better had not our guide overwheeled us, though, ever so entertainingly, by pointing out their beauties and defects according to aesthetic canons fashioned since their day, and had he permitted us to peep round the dominating figures of Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontës, Trollope, George Eliot and Mrs Gaskell at the

Matterhorn or Monte Rosa, which are shared with Italy, but Dom, Jungfrau, incomparable Weisshorn - the list is endless. There was no need to stray beyond the Swiss frontier.

JANET ADAM SMITH.
57 Lansdowne Road, London W11.

'The Forgotten Child'

Sir, - In his review (November 9) of the translated Japanese Buddhist book, *The Forgotten Child* by Domyo Miura, Oliver Bowcock surprisingly makes no comment on its message for Western readers.

To anyone with professional or personal experience of the suffering and after-effects produced by the "lost soul" of an aborted or miscarried pregnancy the Japanese religious method of dealing with it appears profoundly helpful. Their use of doll images in temples, prayer and remembrance must make these unfulfilled beings real and provide a basis for the working out of guilt and grief. Similar procedures - photographs and ceremonies - are now adopted by enlightened maternity hospitals in this country after a still-birth but one finds that people are expected to forget a miscarriage or an abortion, and surprise is encountered by all when the "lost souls" of these babies do indeed, as is feared in Japan for religious reasons, later intrude on the parents' relationship or their subsequent inability to relate to a live infant.

The use of ritual to enhance the future happiness, and hence harmony and wholeness, of an individual in this way seems eminently appropriate in the modern world.

NICOLA PADEL.
The Old School House, Lullington, Somerset.

Modern Country Houses

Sir, - I feel I ought to reply to Harry Gordon Slade's review of my book, *The Latest Country Houses* (November 30). He is entitled to his personal opinions (though perhaps they could be still alive). Many of his statements, however, are untrue.

The firm of Ian Lindsay and Partners was responsible for the initial planning of the reconstruction of Druminnor Castle.

Walton Castle, near Bristol, did have a second floor added in 1980-82. (The upper parts of the walls are of concrete blockwork.)

I did not divide the material in the way suggested, nor would I ever use the word "pastiche" to describe post-1830s Classical architecture.

It is agreed that there are few plans, but the reason for that was security, as is specifically stated in the acknowledgments at the beginning of the book.

JOHN MARTIN ROBINSON.
8 Doughty Mews, London WC1.

Victorian background.

There is an assumption today that in this respect we are in a better position to judge the Victorian writers than were their contemporaries; but the claim is not supported by a convincing body of evidence. Even what appears to be the purely aesthetic test is affected by the pendulum swing of manners and customs . . . The same people who are shocked by Dickens's ignorance of form - one of the defects due, it is to be presumed, to his lack of education - find the wandering ways of Mr Joyce's "Ulysses" to result in the most finished product in English fiction. There are, it is true, laws and standards; but they are elastic and irregular, and, moreover, they are set by the great law-breakers. They are fluid, not final. The ultimate test is the surrender of the majority of readers to the story. It would be folly to deny strict canons; and in any case a short review provides no space for putting forward a literary philosophy. It can only be noted that to apply the canons strictly to the fore-runners is to become entangled in contradictions. Still, we have had a very pleasant stroll with Lord David Cecil and, though left somewhat breathless by the mental gymnastics imposed, have an increased respect for his knowledge, his fairness, his happiness of phrase and his talent for portraiture.

Basil Blackwell

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COMMENTARY

Between crest and trough

Peter Kemp

SHAKESPEARE
Pericles
BBC2

A medley of events that are as far-fetched as they're far-flung, *Pericles* bristles with difficulties for a director. Its text is grossly corrupt; its heroine, ethereally pure. The central figure, Pericles, is passive, tossed around by high seas and life's ups and downs. Around him the play strains in opposing directions. Miraculous survivals and supernatural intervention hoist it towards fantasy; low comedy tugs it back to earth. To make something successfully homogeneous of a work generally taken to be of mixed authorship and which jumps not merely around the Aegean but from Dumb Shows to lively vernacular, from melodrama to poetic intensity, constitutes a formidable challenge.

In David Jones's fine version for the BBC Shakespeare series it's triumphantly met. Streamlined and sumptuous, the production – by giving the play's excitements their full due – shows why, in its day, *Pericles* was so popular. It also brings out with colour and clarity the underlying pattern of the drama – demonstrating the play's coherence, paradoxically, by stressing the diversity of its settings. Written close to *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Pericles* shares that play's interest in contrasting cultures. Helped by a variegated score from Mike Best and atmospheric sets from Don Taylor, Jones's production highlights this. Each centre of action has its very distinctive sights and sounds. Antioch, for instance, where incest and tyranny hold sway, is a sinister compound of grilles, spikes, studded doors, plants with razor-edged

leaves, and whining, shuddering discords. Pentapolis, where courtesy reigns, is emblazoned with white and gold, and rings with vigorous harmonies.

Marked changes of scene like this never let you forget how much this play – awash with oceans and sea imagery – relies upon undulation. Pericles's career oscillates between crest and trough. The societies and characters he encounters represent contrasting extremes. What connects them is a concern with princeliness and parenthood, differing attitudes towards subjects and offspring. There are four royal fathers, each with a daughter, in *Pericles*. The plot, as this production points up, carefully juxtaposes them: so that to omit the play's early scenes, as has sometimes been done, is to mutilate its design. The opening moments of *Pericles* – made tense and barbaric in this television version – plunge dramatically into a court where butchery is resulting from the corrupt attachment to his daughter of Antiochus (played with incisive menace by John Woodvine): fatherhood and kingship are both perverted. Wheeling away from this, Pericles finds his way to a régime that's its diametric opposite: Pentapolis under the benign rule of Simonides (a role rounded out with taking geniality by Patrick Allen) and his daughter Thaisa (whose demure, determined responsiveness to Pericles is nicely caught by Juliet Stevenson). Instead of the lethal, twisted riddle set in Antioch, testing of mettle here takes the form of invigorating, chivalric exercise – something the production does flamboyantly justice to.

Where the first half of *Pericles* traces a father's tribulations, the second follows his daughter's. Like him she is victimized by someone else's perverted parenthood. Antiochus's fury at the guessing of his guilty secret hounds Pericles out on to the sea. Resentment at the

way she overshadows their "sole daughter" leads to the murder attempt launched on her by Dionysa and Cleon (played by a flinty Annette Crosbie and a flinching Norman Rodway, they're reminders of this play's proximity to *Macbeth*). Marina's subsequent ordeals – like her imprisonment in the brothel – take her through some of the work's more gamey scenes. True to its eye for local colour, this production seizes fleshed them out, conveying sexual menace by everything from a background of lewd frescoes against which Marina struggles with Boult, the pimp, to Lila Kaye's hennaed, hissing Bawd, a poisonous Levantine madam.

As Marina, Amanda Redman tends all this off with a moving blend of innocence and pluck, radiating healthy directness and adolescent ardour. It's in her reunion with her father that the play reaches its emotional climax, of course; and here this is very affectingly done. Throughout the play, Mike Gwilym's Pericles is masterly – a gaunt, grave performance, full of both energy and wariness, as though he's constantly waiting to dodge the next blow life will deal. In his portrayal, Pericles's eventual slump into mute despair becomes something rawly authentic – red rubbed-looking eyes and runny nose, a fixed glare out of a shock-stiffened face. The recognition scene between him

and his daughter is almost fierce: fear of disappointment keeps each harsh with the other until they're certain of identities. At moments like these, the production shows that it can brim with emotional power as well as deploying pageantry and illustrative tableaux to good effect.

Not that its tableaux are lifeless. Nothing is allowed to dawdle into mere didacticism. Even a minor role like that of the physician Cerimon leaps to life under the attentions of an actor like Clive Swift. Perhaps most impressive of all the production's feats of resuscitation is the way Edward Petherbridge vitalizes "ancient Gower". Bringing a Celtic burr and a tranquil melancholy to the Chorus, he manages to disguise even the pantomime click of many of their couplets ("Our heir-apparent is a king! / Who dream'd, who thought of such a thing?") Elsewhere, too, there are constant strivings for greater verisimilitude. Marina's age is tactfully raised from fourteen to sixteen. Extraneous material from prose sources is added to her conversation with Lysimachus in the brothel – very curtailed in the play – in order to make his change of heart more credible. Repeatedly, the production steers *Pericles* as close as it can to high-coloured naturalism. Largely because of this, it is a haunting experience.

At war and at play

Keith Jeffery

Sir John Lavery RA, 1856-1941
Ulster Museum, Belfast

During the first decade or so of this century, John Lavery was one of the most collected and admired painters working in Europe. His pictures were sold throughout the world and purchased by such major collections as the

The exhibition contains only a few examples of Lavery's war work. The artist himself had a dismissive opinion of these paintings. In his memoirs he confessed that he felt "nothing of the stark reality" of war and "saw only new beauties of colour and design". In many of the war paintings, people – unusually for Lavery – take second place to form and shape, and to the artistic representation of the machines and machinery of war. Two striking pictures reflect the remoteness of his perception of the conflict: "The Studio Window" (7 July 1917)

in the former the artist's wife looks through a high open window where far above Kensington British fighters and German bombers dance in the bright summer sky. In the latter the heavy green-grey of the far-away balloons contrasts with a white-tended camp, jolly green and yellow haystacks and an amusing goat wandering in the foreground.

Lavery compared himself unfavourably as a war artist with Sir William Orpen. They had much in common. They were the two most senior – in social terms at any rate – of the official artists. Both had Irish backgrounds, and pre-war success based on a genius for portrait-painting. Both, too, were knighted in 1918 "for services connected with the war". Neither man ever visited the front line, but, unlike Lavery, Orpen spent much time in France and his poignant personal pictures capture the "real" war to a much fuller degree than Lavery's Home Front studies, which, nevertheless, reflect and emphasize an important aspect of the "total" war in which Britain was engaged. In 1919, moreover, Lavery painted an important series of pictures for the "Women's Work Section" of the Imperial War Museum – not represented in this exhibition – illustrating the role which women played in France. Lavery, however, could never match Orpen's artistic pugnacity. He was a peaceful man who abhorred the war and had strong sympathies with Germany – where he had had a substantial pre-war following.

Kenneth McConkey in his admirable catalogue observes that after the war Lavery's portrait work increasingly "gave way to evocative souvenirs of events" depicting a leisured and well-heeled way of life. But along with the Dublin Horse Show and the Casino at Monte Carlo, there was a late-flowering interest in Irish affairs. A "portrait in death" of Michael Collins (a personal friend) expresses Lavery's concern for the future of Ireland. A later picture of an Orange procession confirms that the artist was no bigot. One of the last pictures in the exhibition shows the interior of his step-daughter's home on County Kilkenny. Here he died, and if the painting is accurate, he died surrounded by exactly the sort of quiet, sun-filled comfort which he spent his life enjoying.

temporarily down on her back

A pig in a semi

J. K. L. Walker

A Private Function
Odeon, Haymarket

Alan Bennett's screenplay for *A Private Function* takes as its comic point d'appui the life and death of a pig in the year 1947. This was a miserable time for the British, who were hungrier than they had ever been during the war and, apart from the nationalization of the mines and a Royal Wedding, had little to cheer them up. In the film, this latter event inspires a trio of small-town Yorkshire notables to plan a grand dinner constructed round Betty, a black-market pig they are secretly nurturing, but the preparations are thrown into disarray when the pig is stolen by the local chiropodist in order to impress his domineering and social-climbing wife. Stealing, it turns out, is one thing, killing another. Gilbert, the chiropodist (Michael Palin), succeeds in cutting only his own finger, while the engaging Betty runs riot through the house. Reclaimed by her owners, she in the end becomes *pore royal*, but not before Gilbert's wife Joyce (Maggie Smith) has black-mailed her way into the local oligarchy.

Pigs in the sitting-room? Incontinent pigs? Nail clippings snatched up for the swill? Sides of pork hurriedly thrust in beside a bed-ridden old man ("Your mam feels cold, Dorcas." "It's not surprising. She died in 1937"? Broad stuff indeed for Alan Bennett. In his introduction to the screenplay of *A Private Function* (110pp. Faber, paperback, £3.95, 0 571 13571 4), he expands on the difficulties of writing for and directing a pig (four were used). Butchers feature prominently in the film, and Bennett also reminds us that his father was a Leeds butcher who knew all about the pressures to sidestep the Ministry of Food inspector; such as the too-frequent hearse with its pork-filled coffin.

Animals for adults

Lindsay Duguid

Jungle Book
Adelphi Theatre

Like many children's books of the period, Kipling's two *Jungle Books* are held in special affection by adults. Any stage adaptation has to involve both animals and children – and at Christmas in particular it runs the risk of being bathed in a rosy glow of footlights and nostalgia. In this production, which is based on the Mowgli stories, the director John Hartoch is concerned to avoid such unlitany charm and to demonstrate the serious nature of the work. His intentions towards the text are honourable, but in rescuing it from adult misconceptions he has beamed it over the heads of its true audience.

The desire to avoid all taint of Disney, for example, means that the set is a sort of jungle gym with movable ladders and token fronds and that the "talon and tush and claw" are actors in tight making animal noises and miming. The hisses and grunts and snarls are realistic and the movements are appropriately, even embarrassingly, wolf-like or tigerish, but very little is made visually of the vivid and dangerous Jungles. People. Some individual animals are given a little more in the way of costume and character: Jeremy Sinden and Jonathan Izard are appropriately schoolmasterish and Fenella Fielding in a vampish lurching dress is the wrong sex for the great shake Kaa. For the rest, too many recognizable members of the cast have to double prominently as both wolf-pack and Bandar-log.

These are perhaps failures of cash rather than failures of imagination. What makes for more difficulty is the use of Kipling's story "In the Rukh" as a frame to the main events and the introduction of the character of the Forest Officer Gisborne as an audience for Mowgli's tales. The story itself is weak and romantic (apart from its aggressively German comic character: Muller, who happily does not appear) though more revealing of Kipling's

Black-marketeering in food in rural areas wasn't, in fact, taken too seriously, but the film draws attention to some flaws in this good-humoured folk-tradition. The beneficiaries in *A Private Function* turn out to be not the jolly villagers of similar entertainments bent on doing the authorities in the eye (like those in Alexander McKendrick's *Whisky Galore*), but the petty grandees and their friends who have the town sewn up: thus "Who's your tailor?" becomes "Who's your butcher?" In the film, their leader, Dr Swaby (Denholm Elliott) – "a thoroughgoing shit" in Bennett's script directions – epitomizes the old-school medical practitioner about to be pitchforked into the National Health Service. Loathing socialism and the right of any little pillock to claim that he is ill, Swaby is as ready to manipulate his cronies, the solicitor Lockwood (John Normington), into declaring the lease on Gilbert's "surgery" invalid as he is to run his Riley Kestrel over Gilbert's bicycle. Left clutching the giant plaster foot, the sign and symbol of his modest professional status, Gilbert turns sour and looks towards pig-abduction.

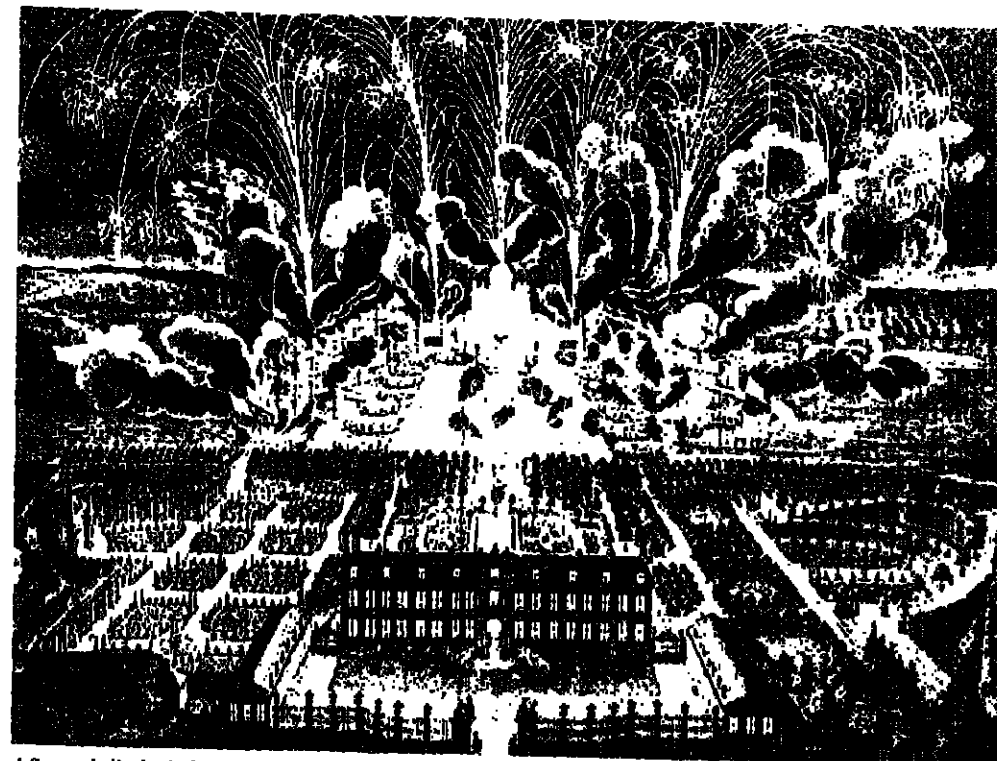
Similarly, Wormald (Bill Paterson), the Ministry inspector who is the scourge of the local butchers and their protectors, the meat-loving police, transcends the usual bureaucratic caricature. With grim Scotch integrity, he sits in his room with the light and the fire turned off in obedience to government fuel-economy directives; to sarcastic enquiries about what the war was fought for he gratingly replies: "For the people. For fair shares." Commanded by his landlady to draw the seams up her gravy-browned legs, Wormald blurts out a proposal of marriage and is met with a qualified "yes". But he must take his work less seriously, become more human. "Whenever I hear anyone say they're only human, I know they've been behaving like beasts"; but the time has come for him to let a notch out of his

emotional life than the early Mowgli stories. Its mentions of whisky, Queen Victoria and government pensions are clearly meant to signal Raj and to offer some historical context for the stories. Its major disadvantages are that, coming at the start of the play, it diminishes the impact of the animal stories, and that it incorporates an awkward love scene for Mowgli and the daughter of Gisborne's Indian servant.

The language of the *Jungle Book*, characterized by high-flown rhetoric and tense runs of narrative, is largely left intact, with description and plot alike delivered Nickleby-fashion by chorus and single voices. Here again Hartoch's good intentions are undone as Kipling's elaborate imagery is contradicted by the simplicity of the staging. The description of fire as "the Red Flower" – an image which works well in the text as a primitive term for an imagined flickering flame – seems odd and even absurd when applied to the red-painted stick which is the torch on stage. The songs fare better. Not set to music (though a little music is provided by sitar and tabla on the sidelines), they are chanted with varying degrees of crispness. The attempt to stage "The Song of the Little Hunter" with the young Mowgli running on the spot in a stroboscopic light is not happy and "The Law of the Jungle" should have been delivered straight, not as a recurring comic chorus.

The most obvious of all the child-excluding aspects of the *Jungle Books*, what might be termed the psycho-sexual elements of the work, are not stressed. The sense of fear and exultation felt in the punishments Mowgli endures from Baloo and Bagheera and the rough-and-tumble with the young wolves is missing and the scenes are played for laughs. It is hard to see David Banks's older Mowgli, a youth much given to throwing back his head and laughing, as an object either of nostalgia or aspiration. There is little of the "angel-strayed among the woods", the half-naked, half-wild boy of Edwardian imagination from Saki and Barrie to Forster – and what there is is somewhat half-baked. Kipling made the valuable distinction himself: "years afterward" Mowgli became a man and married, "but that is a story for grown-ups".

COMMENTARY



A firework display in front of the Dutch-Japanese Palace in Dresden in 1719, engraved by J. A. Corvinus: one of the illustrations in Johann Sebastian Bach: Life, times, influence, edited by Barbara Schwendowius and Wolfgang Döring (179pp. Yale University Press. £30, 0 300 032 68 4).

Calvinist chastity-belt.

Bennett thus seasons the dish with a little moral pepper. More conventionally, he takes hold of the rigid social snobberies of the period, exposing the barrier between the small-town petit and moyen bourgeois which Joyce, roped to Gilbert, pantingly attempts to hurdle. Excruciating refinement and steely determination provide some good moments: Gilbert locked out of the bedroom until he dispatches the pig; Joyce sitting dressed up in the back of the wheel-less Wolsley in the garage (clutching her "Moultin"); and, in the final scene, the "Rose of England" to "drown out Betty's death-throes". All this is as much Maggie Smith as Joyce Kilmer, but it is always a pleasure to watch a great comic actress pulling out the stops. Perhaps, too, Alan Bennett's lines encourage a certain theatricality, for, as he himself ruefully admits in his introduction,

they often read better than they play. For once there may be a case for "You've seen the film, now read the book".

Cinematically, *A Private Function* is no great shakes: too jerky a narrative technique (Bennett's fault as much as the editor's or director's); the cramped feel of a film shot with too few interior sets and "period" exteriors where a twitch of the camera will reveal the Toyota driven by a man in an anorak. The film's pleasures are in the dialogue, the generally high standard of comic acting, and, of course, the moribund society seems, no doubt temporarily, to have given way to a more robust view of the near past. A failed marriage is still a private function, though, and we should always prefer, like Gilbert and the soft-hearted Allardye (Richard Griffiths), to have our pigs alive and frisky rather than on the top table with an apple in their mouths.

Present and correct

Pat Rogers

Samuel Johnson 1709-84
British Library, until February 24

The British Library have secreted their Johnson bicentenary exhibition in a small corner by the Manuscripts Room, as if obscurely aware that a proper tribute to Samuel Johnson would need street theatre in the concourse at Charing Cross station. The full tide of Johnsonian existence has floated away down Great Russell Street, leaving these neatly docketed exhibits high and dry on the shores of scholarship.

What the organizers have produced, most expertly, is not so much a show as a casebook with pictures. Did their Sam Johnson walk that way, he would find a guide shushing him while the Head of Conservation politely remonstrated about his leaky quill and soiled fingers.

Needless to add, many of the exhibits have their own eloquence. There are prospects of Lichfield, cute coloured views of Iona, a picturesquely ruinous St Andrews. Gillray and Rowlandson are set against the institutional effigies: the *Dictionary* is left open at *conquer*, a word Johnson perversely omitted to define in his bookkeeping sense. It's a pity we do not have some botched handwork surviving from Johnson's prentice days as a bookbinder. Instead we have his Oxford MA diploma: and so the drop-out student, failed schoolmaster, frustrated lawyer, temporary tutor and unfulfilled scholar is duly admitted to the pantheon of learning. In all this the BL merely glosses, with impeccable captions, the new critical orthodoxy, which adduces Johnsonian texts for the English moralists' paper, but banishes his person from the English eccentrics (where contemporaries put him). Books and prints inscribe the dignity of a past master; but as to his unrespectable self, that living and breathing Johnson who still disconcerts and awakens present laughter – he has obstinately declined to put in an appearance.

John is like

The cycle of repression

Martin Gilbert

BENJAMIN PINKUS
The Soviet Government and the Jews 1948-1967: A documentary study
 612pp. Cambridge University Press, £35.
 0521247136

The Bolshevik revolution of 1917 seemed to offer the five million Jews of Russia limitless opportunities. All the crushing disabilities imposed upon them by the Tsars were swept away. For the first time in 150 years, Jews could live anywhere in the vast territories of European and Asiatic Russia. Their two main languages, Yiddish and Hebrew, both flourished. The very leadership of the new Bolshevik Russia was to a large extent in Jewish hands.

Whatever euphoria might have been enjoyed by the Jews in those years was swept aside under Stalin. Disabilities far worse than any of those suffered under the Tsars fell upon the Jewish spirit, both religious and secular. By 1939, Jewish parents had become afraid to tell their children anything about their precious 5,000-year-old heritage, or about the cultural and spiritual life of the previous generation.

The Soviet Union's victory over Germany in 1945, like the Revolution of 1917, seemed once more to offer Soviet Jews an end to indignities and repression. Jewish soldiers, sailors and airmen had fought heroically in every war zone, rising to the highest ranks of command. Jewish partisans had been active behind the Nazi lines. After so much slaughter, and the murder of at least two million Jewish civilians on Soviet soil, the survivors hoped that Jewish suffering under the Nazis, and the Jewish contribution to the Soviet war effort, would combine to bring them better times.

This was not to be; the way the bad times returned with a vengeance is clearly seen in 173 documents published in this volume by Ben-

jamin Pinkus. The documents bring the story of Soviet Jewry almost to the eve of their third moment of hope, the opening of the gates of emigration in 1971 which was followed by the departure of 250,000 Jews in less than a single decade. To all intents and purposes, these gates are now closed, and Jewish emigration has again been brought to an abrupt end.

Dr Pinkus has written a scholarly and thought-provoking book. Nearly a hundred pages of reference notes testify to his dedication. The story which the documents tell is one of persistent harassment, repression, execution and, in the last years of Stalin's rule, the threat of mass deportation to Siberia: a systematic and at times bloody campaign against Jewish identity and self-expression.

Although at Yalta in February 1945 Stalin had agreed with Roosevelt and Churchill to permit the Jews to establish a national home in Palestine (a policy to which Britain had been committed since 1917), official Soviet opposition to Zionism emerged within a year. In the Soviet press, Zionism was soon being described as a movement linked to "influential American circles", as well as to "British Imperialism". Two years before the establishment of the State of Israel, an article in one leading Soviet journal described the Jewish settlements in Palestine as "an instrument of racist hate, propaganda and chauvinism".

For a short period, from August 1947 to August 1948, the Soviet Government supported the establishment of Israel, but it quickly turned its back on the new State. Ironically, as Pinkus points out, this brief promulgation of a "pro-Israel" policy in Moscow was paralleled by an increasingly "anti-Jewish" policy in the internal attitudes of Soviet officialdom, characterized by the murder in January 1948 of Solomon Mikhoels, the Director of the Jewish Theatre in Moscow, and one of the most prominent figures of Soviet Jewry. This campaign culminated in the dissolution of most of the Jewish cultural institutions, followed by the

mass arrest of leading figures in the Yiddish cultural world. Arrest was followed in most cases by execution. Several hundred leading Jewish writers, actors, painters, sculptors and musicians disappeared, never to be seen or heard of again.

One of the most instructive chapters in this book is that which documents the Soviet portrayal between 1948 and 1967 of Jewish wartime suffering and resistance under the Nazis. Pinkus asserts, and gives considerable documentation to back up his assertion, that the portrayal of the Holocaust and Jewish resistance in the Soviet press "is one of the best gauges in Soviet policy on the Jewish question".

It is remarkable how quickly the fact of Jewish suffering on Soviet soil and the Jewish contribution to the Soviet war effort became a non-subject. In 1946 a substantial volume was ready for printing in Moscow. Entitled the *Black Book*, it set down documentary evidence of Nazi crimes against the Jews. In 1948, not only was it withdrawn from publication, but the type was broken up. A similar fate befell the *Red Book*, which was to have portrayed the part played by Jews in the battles fought by the Red Army as well as the previously much-mentioned Jewish contribution to resistance in Russia, both in the ghettos and in partisan units.

By 1949, the partial concealment of the Jewish contribution to wartime resistance was replaced, as Pinkus shows, by total silence. This policy was carried so far, he writes, "that any mention of Jewishness was erased from the few monuments erected after the war to the memory of the Jewish victims of the Nazis".

It was the Jews themselves who, at the very end of the period documented in this volume, began to gather at the various mass-murder sites of the Nazi era, particularly the death pits and ravines outside Vilna and Riga, and at Babi Yar in Kiev. There, these "Soviet citizens of Jewish nationality", as they are officially

designated, sought to remember the dead, to clear the sites of debris, and to demand the establishment of monuments to those who had been killed. Pinkus publishes the full text of two such demands.

It was at these memorial meetings in the 1960s that the Jewish renaissance of the 1970s was born, not only a renewal of Jewish consciousness, but a new sense of national awareness. After all, there was now a State of Israel, so that the Soviet Government's own designation of the Jews as a "nationality" stimulated first the wish and then the demand for emigration to the distant, but more fully Jewish, "national home" on the shores of the eastern Mediterranean.

With the closing down of mass emigration in 1981, many of the manifestations of Soviet anti-Jewish attitudes so painstakingly documented by Pinkus for the years 1948 to 1967 have re-emerged. Once more, Soviet publications seek to belittle the scale and nature of Jewish suffering during the war years and to cut out all reference to specific Jewish contributions to resistance. Once again, it is made extremely difficult for Jews to gather at sites such as Babi Yar for memorial meetings. But whereas the repressions so fully represented in these documents took place in a community which could see no prospect whatever of leaving the Soviet Union, today's arrests, trials and imprisonment, together with the continuing pressure on Jewish cultural life, take place against a background of roused expectation, making them all the more difficult for the individual Jew to bear.

Today's Soviet Jews have seen come to a virtual end the range of opportunities opened up during the 1970s. Many of them now fear, and Dr Pinkus's documentation would seem to suggest, that the bad times have returned yet again, and that considerable faith, hope and fortitude will be needed to see them through.

violin ended in miserable failure, and at school he fell to the bottom of his class, incurring general disapprobation, "affecting even my brother's attitude to me, which hurt most of all". In the summer of 1911, when Boris suddenly walked out of the family's holiday home, Alexander was sent to tidy his room, and failing to recognize the mass of papers as poetry, "tidied them in piles according to size". It is left to his niece, Ann Pasternak Slater, who has written a lively introduction as well as producing a stylish translation, to point out that Alexander himself was far from untalented and became a distinguished architect.

This is a very gentle and appealing book: gentle in its pace, its sense of humour, and its attitude to family and friends. Seventy years on, Alexander still worries about whether his mother resented giving up her concert career for the sake of husband and children, still agonizes over the chance mishaps that caused his father to abandon the major new canvas that might have marked a turning-point in his work. Yet this very gentleness is a powerful statement in its own right. Just as the modern city planners have bulldozed the peaceful old Dog Squares "where everything was scaled for the individual, not the crowd", so modern life has crushed those humane sensibilities that were characteristic of pre-Revolutionary Russia at its best.

In his anthology, *The Stalinist Legacy: Its Impact on 20th-century world politics* (SSIP, Penguin, Paperback, £4.95, 0 14 022429 7), Tariq Ali sets out to "explain the origins of Stalinism and to chart its development on a global scale". Part 1, "The Roots of the Problem", includes essays by, or extracts from, the writings of, Trotsky, Christian Rakovsky, Ernest Mandel, Isaac Deutscher, Perry Anderson, Marcel Liebman and Michael Löwy, while among the essays in Part 2, "Stalinism in Crisis", are "Stalin and the Second World War" by Fernando Claudin, "How They Crushed The Prague Spring of 1968" by Josef Smrkovsky, "The Polish Vortex: Solidarity and Socialism" by Oliver MacDonald and "Solzhenitsyn: The Witness and the Prophet" by Daniel Slamon.

Diminished pictures

Alan Hollinghurst

DENTON WELCH
The Journals
 Edited by Michael De-la-Noy
 378pp. Allison and Busby, £14.95.
 085015301
I Left My Grandfather's House
 156pp. Allison and Busby, £17.95 (paperback, £2.95).
 085016057
MICHAEL DE-LA-NOY
Denton Welch: The making of a writer
 303pp. Viking, £12.95.
 0670800562

In 1952, Jocelyn Brooke edited a selection from Denton Welch's journals. Restricted by both the danger of libel and the fear of boring or shocking his readers he included "a little over half" of the MS which Welch had compiled in school notebooks over the last six years of his short life. He also gave us only a little over half of the man. Some passages were sabotaged by discretion: "Just before we got out he said, 'I went to the --- to see ---' pictures, after I had read what --- said in the *New Statesman*." And on the larger scale he suppressed much of Welch's imaginative concerns - with gossip, men, old buildings and *objets de vertu*. To Welch, himself sabotaged by the cycling accident which damaged his spine at the age of twenty and left him thereafter a permanent invalid, such concerns, and their record in the journal, were of heightened, emblematic significance. The *Journals* contain little that can readily be dispensed with, and Michael De-la-Noy's new complete edition, along with his biography of Welch, goes far to reconstitute the whole man.

Welch's was essentially an aesthetic sensibility. As a child and as an art student he felt constitutionally alone. The death of his mother and his accident were critical events which endorsed his isolation, his remoteness from ordinary human happiness, and the concentration of his feelings. Though he observed objects closely he was careless and exploitative of them, until his affair with Eric Oliver which surprised him in the last years of his life; the passions of the *Journals* are narcissistic and devoted to the exploration of himself and his sensibility. Physically damaged, lame, impotent, bedridden for weeks on end, Welch clung to the fragile endurance of old china and glass, the poignant dereliction of eighteenth-century grottoes and plaques, the brief perfection of young men about to be "spoiled" by time or death (it was during the Second World War). "My thoughts are never on nature", he insists at the beginning of the *Journals*; they go out instead to "lovers lying on the banks, young men that are dead". So cruelly "spoiled" himself, his emotions recurrently focus in this Housmanesque nexus of voyeurism and the "torturing flood" of elegiac recall.

Welch's aestheticism helped him to arrest time, which promised him for thirteen years an early and painful death, and to master experience. It was a way of seeing which crystallized and distanced events into objects for plangent contemplation: "All still in the moonlight, stifled, spun into a glass picture", he writes after learning that the local squire is dead. That this airless, miniaturizing vision was a recourse from pain and distress is repeatedly made clear in *A Voice Through a Cloud*, Welch's last, unfinished book, which deals with his accident and its aftermath. Lying in hospital, he dreams up and imaginatively inhabits houses and gardens which are like plates from books, or pictures on old china. When another patient goes for an appendectomy he sees the operation happening in his mind:

There was something so arresting about this picture of the dreaming patient and the busy surgeon cutting and sewing with blood-stained fingers that I dwelt on it until it became blindingly clear and tiny, like the jewelled diminished picture reflected in a dewdrop. Early in the journals, ill in bed, he escapes by bringing Zoffany conversation-pieces to life, in an animation that is both delicate and grotesque, and saw himself as a little boy wandering through an Elizabethan country house. It is almost by the great high feather-crested bed, rubbing my cheek on the damask and brittle silver-trimmed hangings, running my fingers along the torricelli-shell and ebony cabinet which his cousin

in the damp. I am by the withered oak of the window-sill where the rust of the latch seems to grow like an orange lichen. Out over the mist-drenched garden goes my breath in a plume as I push open the shaking, faintly smoky-purple panes.

It is a passage which typically combines an intense apprehension of physical objects with a nostalgic desire for sequestration. It makes one think of Knole (near which he lived) - and hence perhaps of *Orlando* and of the literary establishment towards which he aspired. It deploys its connoisseurship to enhance and infect the writer's self-image.

Whenever he could get out (and he had periods of surprising fitness, driving, cycling and walking) Welch cruised the antique shops of the Kentish towns and villages. The *Journals* enlarge the impression in Welch's books of his fierce, almost erotic covetousness. He had a

Jocelyn Brooke's edition of the *Journals* has as its frontispiece a photograph of Welch sitting at an inlaid marble table, with candles burning in elaborate glass lustres and the corner of a baroque tapestry visible behind. It gives the impression of an altar or of the preparations for a séance (and Eric Oliver has recorded, though De-la-Noy does not, Welch's "strong, even fascinated, belief in the existence of ghosts"). Welch did the decorations for his own books, and the frontispiece to *Maiden Voyage* is evidently drawn directly from this photograph. A comparison of the two softly lit half-profiles illustrates how Welch enhanced his self-image, giving the face itself a haunted expression, and enlarging the eyes and mouth, while the details of the background tapestry are stylized into vermiculated or coralline forms. De-la-Noy detects self-disgust in the

unrecognizable today. Everywhere you went, apparently, working-class lads were stripping off their clothes and diving into rivers, and you could sit down and share your cheese and biscuits with them. Or dark young men would approach you and say significantly, "I'd do anything for a bob". The war being on, there were also soldiers - British and Commonwealth as well as American doughboys on exercises and getting drunk - and Italian and German prisoners grateful for any kindness. Drawings of some of these types, such as Eddy Link ("a half-naked baker and confectioner"), were included in the recent exhibition of Welch's pictures at Abbott and Holder; but their portraits in words are far more effective. Typically, Welch aestheticizes them, turning them into naere or copper or bronze, or describing their café-au-lait backs, as if they were chairs. Antique-shopping in Sevenoaks he gaily mixes his two quests: "trying to find something worthy of being bought. I saw a Georgian milk-jug for £6. I saw a red-headed boy-man, dressed in red Harris tweed... like a toy."

Even so, confronting everything he most wants and most is not, his aesthetic control begins to crack. The obsession with jewelled or ceramic perfection has its underside in a passion for mud, dirt and wildness. So much deprived of physical exhilaration he would, when well, test himself to the limit, walking and cycling, sitting in the sun until he was dizzy, or in the driving rain, "reading Dorothy Wordsworth's diary until the page was soaked and almost falling to pieces". And he watched and talked (though never, it seems, did more) with an "arrestingly dirty" tractor-driver, or with "gutturally crooning" boys "padding through the slime... running their hands harshly all over their bodies to scrape off the mud". When he takes a light from a sailor he is magnetized by his difference: "His fingers were dirty, nicotine, something from another world." It is the familiar attraction of guilt-ridden middle-class homosexuals to a life that is dirty, instinctual. "There is a telling passage in a *Fort* through a *Cloud* where he recalls that on finding himself severely injured, "it seemed to me something had happened which I had expected all my life". The accident struck him as a retribution for guilt and also as a kind of fulfilment - the catalyst to his brilliant and successful career as an autobiographical writer. A comparable ambivalence can be found in all his work. In his love of the horrid, the "repellent-attractive" things he dwells on. These tendencies were stimulated by his experience of illness, incontinence, decay; but the desire to confront such things was clearly a component of his character from childhood. Often in the *Journals* he abandons the log of the present and calls up vivid episodes of his past; one such instance of emotional regression was written on the day he learnt of his father's death, but deals instead with a complex of issues about his mother. When he first learnt that she was going to die he was nine and staying with her in a hotel; and he remembers how

up through the closed windows comes the crazy, tinkling churning of a barrel-organ - "Je cherche, Je cherche Titina, Titina, Oh Titina!" The music is so beautiful, and bringing with it that awful and all-enveloping depression of popular tunes. The gayer and more sprightly they are, the more evocative they seem to be of gloom and despair.

It is an incident uncannily parallel to a more famous one in the childhood of Mahler when, his father having been especially brutal to his mother, the boy rushed out into the street, where, in Ernest Jones's account, "a hurdy-gurdy... was grinding out the popular Viennese air 'Ach, du lieber Augustin'". In Mahler's opinion the conjunction of high tragedy and light amusement was from then on inextricably fixed in his mind, and the one mood inevitably brought the other with it. There are a score of differences, but it seems clear that in Welch too the neurotic precipitations of mood from pleasure to pain, gaiety to gloom, can be traced back to the psychological crises of his early life, and found their harsh embodiment in the experience of his last years.

There is an extraordinary passage (Welch's work is all extraordinary passages; he is an anthropologist of his own life) in the journal for



Denton Welch's portrait of Lord Berners as a boy dressed as Robinson Crusoe, reproduced by courtesy of Abbott and Holder, 73 Castelnau, London SW13.

hunger for porcelain, pictures, old silver. Country houses stirred him not only to repopulate them with their eighteenth-century ghosts but to want them for himself, to do up and put his things in. This possessiveness was exacerbated by his never being able to afford a house of his own, and living in a succession of rented homes, such as Pitt's Folly Cottage, rooms above the garage of a house in Hadlow. In these he assembled his possessions, which constituted a kind of museum of his sensibility - not of what he called "boringly eighteenth-century revival" taste, or of "Whistler wispiness", but of vigorous, bright, eclectic, non-English taste, "Walter Scott! beautiful". With the fame of his first book, *Maiden Voyage*, came commissions for articles and illustrations, and he did a picture of his living-room for *Vogue*. A (female) fan wrote to say it looked a "perfect fairy house", and it is a shame that De-la-Noy has not sought this limelight. Nor does he illustrate the doll's house which Welch restored, and which is now in the Bethnal Green Museum. He does, however, include in the biography a bizarre photograph of Welch lying on a fur rug surrounded by sea-shells.

When not questing for antiques or ruined ice-houses, Welch searched out men. The *Journals* give an impression of a Kent almost

On an individual people

ALEXANDER PASTERNAK
A Vanished Present
 Edited and translated by Ann Pasternak Slater
 214pp. Oxford University Press, £12.95.
 0192122258

Boris Pasternak died in 1960. Alexander, his younger brother, lived on in Moscow until 1982. The "vanished present" of these memoirs refers to the period from his birth in 1893 to 1917. So sharp was the discontinuity between the world before and after the Revolution that for him childhood and youth did not vanish slowly into the past, but remained vividly and poignantly alive.

With loving detail he re-creates the old Moscow, full of quiet, welcoming places like Dog Squares ("just two or three benches, a memorial statue or a modest fountain with its single weak jet of water trickling into a stone basin"); the Moscow where "on winter evenings the kerosene street lamps burned dim on their short, red-painted posts", and where the spectacle of the fire brigade driving full tilt down the middle of the street was surpassed only by the dramatic break-up of the ice-floes on the river during the spring thaw. Today, the ice is blown up by the military many miles above town, and the Dog Squares have all gone, replaced by imposing new avenues or by the "intestinal convulsions of overpasses, underpass, and pedestrian subway". There is more to all this, however, than simple nostalgia. He is not sentimental about the past. The object poverty of the peasant in the village only forty miles from Moscow where the family spent the summers of 1904 and 1905 did not make him feel sad but angry and, like so many of his contemporaries, his sympathies were on the side of revolution. What distresses him at a deeper level is not so much the physical destruction of Moscow as the changes wrought in its citizens' lives. Palm Sunday Bazaar was a unique occasion because it united everyone, while the old Mushroom Market had "a family atmosphere of common interest and domestic simplicity".

Pasternak children met Moscow's leading artists, and through their mother (who had given her first piano recital at the age of eight) Moscow's leading musicians. Alexander's vivid pen-portraits of Scriabin, Rachmaninov and Busoni are beautifully complemented by Leonid's pencil sketches. As a schoolboy of fifteen, he attended Isadora Duncan's opening matinee in Moscow, and in a few sentences he persuades us that her performance really was unique. Not that his interests were confined to the arts. One of the best chapters describes a flight by the pioneer aviator, Utochkin, wearing "a finely checked, fashionable grey suit, bright yellow, square-toed American boots, and a straw boater".

Boris emerges sympathetically from these pages, as a near-model elder brother. He never abused the three years' difference in age between them, and was a helpful guide in music and literature. Yet Alexander often found him baffling (and he was not the only one). From childhood Boris "was distinguished by an in-

ordinate passion to accomplish things patently beyond his powers". If he failed, or if he was defeated in some game, he withdrew immediately into a deep and terrifying silence; the project, or the game, would never be heard of again. He interpreted such failures as "celestial signs of his own inadequacy". The discovery that he did not have perfect pitch made him abandon music completely.

Surrounded by so much family brilliance, Alexander seems determined to play down any gifts of his own. In 1898 Leonid Pasternak was illustrating Tolstoy's *Resurrection* for the magazine *Niva*. Boris, then eight, was producing a journal of his own. From the country he sent Alexander a postcard, informing him in adult, authoritative tones that his story was nearing completion, and reminding him that the two commissioned illustrations should not be delayed. "Orders for illustrations", Alexander comments characteristically, "were usually sent to me, not because my brother couldn't draw them himself, but because I couldn't write." His attempts to learn the piano and

Knightsbridge, Summer Evening

So vast, these plains. And the faster the wheels revolve the more still they appear.

And just for the moment the sun has parked itself at the head of the street, the street also is stopped. It is held by the golden spokes like an early photograph through whose brownish patina one strains to note a family likeness, my father's eyebrows or the unconscious sucking in of his lower lip.

Wagon trains instead are moving out, children are running and handkerchiefs waving through clouds of dust, while high on the umpteenth floor the office junior moves a yellow marker flag another inch across the map.

CHARLES BOYLE

Jocelyn Brooke

Smiling through

Richard Boston

CLIVE JAMES
Flying Visits
180pp. Cape. £8.95.
0234 022121
ALAN COREN
Bumf
160pp. Robson. £5.95.
086051 2916
JOHN WELLS
Fifty Glorious Years
Penguin. £2.95.
01400 74597
TIM DOWLEY (Editor)
Taking Off: An anthology of parodies, send-ups and imitations.
259pp. Methuen. £8.50.
0413 524845
JILL HARTSON and JILL DAWSON
The Ultimate Irrelevant Encyclopaedia
271pp. Allen and Unwin. £8.95.
004 827111 X

In the words of William Empson's reflection from Anita Loos, a girl can't go on laughing all the time. It goes for boys too, especially at this time of the year which, for a boy like I, brings not Beaujolais nouveau but the annual crop of funny books to review. My heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains my soul as I contemplate the heaps of facetiae on such subjects as (to take a few at random) climbing, fishing, penises, eccentrics, epitaphs, Australia and prep schools. Presumably they sell. It is hard to believe that they are read. They are bought and disposed of as quickly as possible, wrapped in paper with holly and bells on, and a label saying From Boris to Doris, or From Flo to Joe. They are better to give than to receive. As often as not they quickly find their proper place in the lavatory, where they can be put (in the phrase of Sir Thomas Urquhart) both to inferior and posterior uses.

Having said which, I find the pile of books in front of me much reduced. The bibliographical

but it does add a bit of tone to that part of the bookshop or library. Anyway, he can be very funny. The book consists of what James calls "postcards" sent between 1976 and 1983 from various parts of the world which, as the title indicates, he visited by air. His passion for aeroplanes doesn't cut much ice with a reader such as myself who has an equal and opposite distast, dislike and fear of them. I felt distinctly uneasy as James took off at the beginning of each postcard, and when we arrived intact I immediately started worrying about the flight back. Reassurance was not to be found in the book's epigraph, a quotation by the late Francis Hope, who was killed in a plane crash. James's flights sound as uncomfortable, uneventful, repetitive and tedious as everyone else's. He has the usual moans about the in-flight movies and the food, the airport waits and mix-ups, the late departures and arrivals and the jet lag. The postcard from Biarritz begins: "The weekly Air France Caravelle to Biarritz took off from Heathrow only an hour late." The next postcard begins: "British Airways were justifiably proud of getting your correspondent to Rome only three hours behind schedule." Doubtless both statements are true, but they are so similar to one another, and to the experience of everyone else, that they hardly seem worth recording.

In his curiously defensive introduction, James says that: "To complain that modern travel has become a cliché is a cliché in itself." For James "modern travel" means flying. He takes no account of the unchallenged superiority of earth-bound transport, which has the advantage of showing the places between the points of arrival and departure. The advantage of air

Doctor and Patients, compiled by Dr. Dannie Abse (114pp. £3.95. 0-19 214148-1), and *Plays and Players*, compiled by Phillips Harrill (110pp. £3.95. 0-19 214147-3), are the most recent publications in the Small Oxford Books series. These pocket anthologies, lightly illustrated with old woodcuts and engravings, bring together anecdote and comment in verse and prose.

travel can be that you spend less time getting there and more time being there. But James spends hardly any time there at all. He steps off the plane, gets over his jet lag, gives a few snapshot impressions and a bit of potted history, shows off, makes a few wisecracks, and then he's back on the plane again.

These really are flying visits. I kept thinking of Captain Spaulding (or some such Groucho character), whose song went, if I remember rightly, "Hullo, I must be going, I cannot stay, I must away. I only came to say I must be going." When James visits Pauline Kael he describes the flight, eats a "superb omelette" in Miss Kael's company, hears Jimmy Giuffrè play the saxophone, and next sentence he's on the plane again. He's equally uninformative about the other celebrities he bumps into, from Kenneth Tynan to Kiri Te Kanawa: their names are dropped, and that's it. David Frost names are dropped, and that's it. David Frost has shown the deleterious effect of too much television combined with too much flying. It would be a pity if Clive James, a far bigger and more necessary talent, should suffer the same way.

Alan Coren's *Bumf* is his umpteenth collection of his weekly pieces for *Punch*. Since I have been a fairly regular contributor to *Punch* under his editorship, my motives may be suspected if I heap praise on him. If so, then it's just too bad. Now that Perelman has gone, Michael Frayn is lost to the theatre and Woody Allen to films, Coren has no rivals as a writer of comic pieces. The blurb quotes Clive James to

Post-Pooterings

E. S. Turner

BARRY PAIN
The Eliza Stories
270pp. Michael Joseph. £7.95.
0907516 394

... a household word like the Grossmiths' Mr Pooter. In the view of many, he was funnier than Pooter, but because Pain scrupulously avoided giving him either a first name or a surname he was fatally handicapped on the road to immortality. Was this namelessness conceivably a self-denying gesture to the Grossmiths — a recognition that chronologically Pooter deserved pride of place in the comic pantheon?

Eliza's husband was best narrator of several volumes of humorous sketches which appeared on railway bookstalls early this century. They had a big sale but were not designed to last and the literary establishment tended to scoff at them, as they scoffed at Jerome K. Jerome. Being a wag was not yet a respectable trade. W. B. Henley advised Pain to devote

All right all round

Christopher Hitchens

GEORGE PLIMPTON and CHRISTOPHER HEMPHILL (Editors)
D. V. by Diana Vreeland
196pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.
0277 784064

Dating what a lot of parties... Kabuki parties, Weimar parties, Edward VIII parties, Coco Chanel parties, Farouk parties: Diana Vreeland has trodden the measure. Thanks to the infinite patience of her two courtiers (George Plimpton of the *Paris Review*, and a Christopher Hemphill who will surely go far) we can all now, vicariously, cop the lot.

Her chroniclers obviously find *la Vreeland* irresistible — hence, perhaps, the faintly blasphemous title — so we learn a great deal about the high old days at *Vogue* and *Harpers Bazaar*; the world of Cecil Beaton and Balenciaga. We even learn some things more than once. Repetition is hard to avoid in a narrative of this kind, and it's dummed into it that the French hate to travel and that a pre-war night-gown could easily require three fittings. The

effect that Coren "has a comic imagination which can actually render your jaded scribe flabbergasted" (actually?), while the *New York Times* hails Coren as the natural heir to Thurber, but he is very like Perelman, in both his wild inventiveness and his verbal dexterity. Like Perelman his usual starting-point is in a newspaper cutting about some minor events — the opening of a hotel for phobics, the retirement of the night Head Proof Reader of the *Guradian*, a bicycle tour of France by a group of English policemen, and so on. He plunges straight into some wild flights of fancy which invariably makes you laugh while at the same time you wonder whether the joke can possibly be sustained for 2,000 words. Not only can Coren keep it up, but the piece almost always get funnier and funnier. To produce work of such quality week after week, year after year, is a remarkable literary achievement.

John Wells's *Fifty Glorious Years* is described as a festive tribute to Margaret Hilda Thatcher. The tone is mostly that of the *Private Eye* "Dear Bill" letters, but instead of dealing with the events of the day we are taken back to the Prime Minister's formative years. At the time of Munich, "As 'wet' governments in Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland increasingly provoked the German government with quibbles about the exact nature of an initially German-dominated but united Europe, Margaret Hilda watched powerless. For all her efforts, war broke out." However, it was through the single-handed efforts of this Renaissance lady,

himself to serious writing, but Sir Alfred Noyes, as Terry Jones points out in his introduction to this book, said that even Pain's ephemeral work had "more genius in it than ninety per cent of the solemn 'Art' of the day".

Pain, educated at Sedburgh and Cambridge, was an Army coach (a crammer?) at Guildford

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word "totally" recurs and recurs, as does the expression "a bit of right", which is applied omnivorously to everything and everybody from Cole Porter to minor and major royalty.

Yet the whole, which might easily have been irritating and trivial beyond description, is almost endearing. Joyce Cary came up with the phrase "tumbly remark" to cope with those moments of crass, ineffable snobbery (coal in the bath, "I see no point in being poor", "He told me he hadn't eaten for three days and I told him he must force himself") which amount to cruelty. Diana Vreeland's version of this *argot* is not stupid or unkind, just sweetly silly. It is usually prefaced or adorned with the word "every", "nobody" or "all" (as in, "nobody is in London in August"). The Prince of Wales's ADC, "Fruity" Metcalfe, for example, "was always extremely prompt, as all Englishmen were in those days". During the fall of France, "everyone travelled with a little brandy". And Jacqueline Kennedy "has given this country such an inspiration of style, of beauty, of everything our civilisation stands for" (italics mine). But these innocent fatitudes do not have the fascinating nastiness of, say, Clive Gannon. They are as bland as the Camille Claudel health and beauty tips with which the book is scat-

"internationally acclaimed athlete, sports-woman, political philosopher and three times winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature", that the Axis Powers were brought down in 1945. The Wilderness Years were soon followed by Power Beyond Our Wildest Dreams. Wells stuffs in a fair amount of padding to make the joke run to book length, but it's all so far over the top that a girl can go on laughing most of the time.

Taking Off is an anthology of parodies. It has a distinctly 1960s flavour, relying heavily on the *Beyond the Fringe*, *Private Eye*, Monty Python generation; and why not? A book that contains not only Alan Bennett's sermon on the text of "my brother Esau is an hairy man" but also Peter Sellers's "Balham, Gateway to the South" can't be all bad, and in fact is mostly very good.

The Ultimate Irrelevant Encyclopaedia contains a wealth of useless information. Marie Antoinette had the same bust measurement as Jayne Mansfield. Anatole France had one of the smallest brains ever recorded. Most Bots-wanna bushmen have only one testicle. Neil Kinnock's name is an anagram of "I knock Lenin", while Ken Livingstone's is "Votes Lenin king", and Konstantin Chernenko is "Another ten N. Kinnocks". The giggling commentary becomes rather wearisome, and there are too many factual errors (Sweden does not have the highest suicide rate in the world by a long way). If useless information is untrue, then it's worse than useless.

deeply wronged when his wife's mother, instead of sending a decent Christmas present, graciously returns to him a bunch of IOUs for sums he has borrowed. On the cultural level he fancies himself as a reciter and agonizes over how to arrange his features when delivering that admittedly difficult line, "Smiling, the boy fell dead".

Eliza, his delightful young wife, has lost "the silly playfulness" which sometimes characterized their courting, "and if this is due to the sobering effects of association with a steady and thoughtful character I am not displeased". She retains enough spirit and native wit to administer non-shrewish squelches.

The last batch of stories is written by the couple's son, an ill-favoured little monster who is determined not to be led into doing things for nothing. As a character he goes somewhat over the top; he sheds light on, but is not quite in the same class as, his magnificent father.

All in all, these stories are professional humour at its best and were very well worth exhuming. The fun is timeless and the period flavour fly strings, silver salt-cellars, letters delivered in the evening, tonic port-wine rich in phosphates — is an extra bonus.

tered. ("I can tell you it works. Never lose sight of your gallbladder.")

Actually, my italics are almost superfluous: D. V. needs an awful lot of them to keep gushing along. As "when I say 'orange', I don't mean yellow-orange, I mean red-orange — the orange of Bakst and Diaghilev, the orange that changed the century." "Today the great varnish of the world that covers the waterfront is Revlon."

There is obviously something spoilt about a person who sees the century in terms of fabrics, accessories, cuisine and captions. But there are those in many cultures, starved of all luxury or distraction, who might feel that we who are studiously careless of such things are spoilt or blasé also. D. V. is in no doubt where she stands. As the Nazis drove towards Paris, she met outside the Ritz "My friend Ray Goetz, the most amusing man who ever lived. He had on a blue felt hat. 'Oh Ray!' I said. 'Isn't it awful about the war?' He turned. He looked at me for just a minute — just a split second — and asked, 'What war?'"

Make what you will of that. I report merely what D. V. herself made of it; namely, "I don't think I've ever been more grateful to a human being."

The shock-headed one

S. S. Prawer

HEINRICH HOFFMANN
Der Struwwelpeter polygot
Edited by Walter Sauer
136pp. Munich: dtv. DM 12.80
3423 102543
Struwwelpeter
24pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £3.95.
07100 15348
Struwwelpeter: Merry stories and funny pictures.
28pp. Piccolo. Paperback. £1.25.
0330 232827

Some years ago a contributor to *Die Zeit* amused himself by bombarding his readers with a series of sensational headlines: Neglected Child Pilloried, Tormentor of Animals bitten by Dog, Young Fire-Raiser Burnt to Death, Children Thrown into Ink-Vat, Thumb-Sucker Cruelly Maimed, Anorexic Boy Starves to Death, Daydreamer Fished from River, Boy Disappears in Hurricane. It will not have taken German readers long to realize what game was being played; and English readers too, I am sure, will have little difficulty in translating these spoof headlines back into more familiar titles: "Shock-Headed Peter"; "The Story of Cruel Frederick"; "The Dreadful Story of Harriet and the Matches"; "The Story of the Inky Boys"; "Little Suck-a-Thumb"; "Augustus who would not have any Soup"; "Johnny Head-in-Air"; "The Story of Flying Robert". The images are still potent in Germany; the recent political scandal involving Count Lambsdorff was glossed by the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* with a cartoon showing a huge bearded figure dipping the count into an equally huge inkwell above the caption "Da lunder grosse Nikolaus...", a direct quotation from "The Story of the Inky Boys".

In England too *Struwwelpeter* has often been pressed into political service. In the 1890s Harold Begbie's *Political Struwwelpeter* began with "The Neglected Lion" in place of Shock-headed Peter himself.

See the British Lion pose
Wildly graping for his foes!
Now who lanker up the laws
Never measure his claws:
And you will observe with pain
No one ever crimps his mane;
Seeing that he's so neglected
Do you wonder he's dejected?

1914 brought E. V. Lucas's *Swollen-Headed William*, with drawings adapted by George Morrow, which placed a hydrocephalous Wilhelm II on Peter's pedestal:

Look at William! There he stands,
With the blood upon his hands.
His moustaches daunt the sky,
Puffing in his great Aye.
What of Heaven William thinks
Is no fiddle of the Sphinx,
But a matter much more dim
Is what Heaven thinks of him.

The Second World War, predictably, brought a *Struwwel Hitler*, concocted in 1941 by Robert and Philip Spence, in which Goering stood in for Augustus who would not eat his soup:

Our Hermann was a chubby lad;
Now, lots of medals Hermann had:
And all cried "Heil!" when fully dressed
He spread them on his ample chest.
He ate and drank up all he could
And always found the butter good.
But one day, one September day,
He perched out "Take that grease away!
And give me glorious guns instead!
I won't have butter on my bread!"

The part of Flying Robert was usurped, in *Struwwel Hitler*, by Rudolf Hess, who had just landed in Scotland, while Hitler, blood dripping from his hands, had the verses on Peter's pedestal adapted to suit his case, with the last couplet reading: "Pleasant never could be brittle / Then the word of Adolf Hitler."

The anonymous Victorian translation on which all the English parodies were based, remained, and remains, in print. Booksellers report a continuing demand for it by adults who claim it gave them nightmares, yet who feel that its fascination should not be denied to their children.

It is now exactly 140 years ago that Dr Med Heinrich Hoffmann, who was making a reputation in his native Frankfurt for work with the poor, with children, and with the mentally dis-

turbed, searched the town in vain for a picture book that he could give his four-year-old son for Christmas in the certain knowledge that the little boy would enjoy it. He returned with an empty exercise-book and set to work composing such a book himself. His father had always been fond of drawing, and had encouraged his son's amateur talent; and in his medical practice he had found that he could keep children happy while listening to their chests and looking down their throats if he kept a drawing in play. If he drew a little boy, for instance, he would lengthen his hair and nails until the picture resembled Gavarni's lithograph of the boy who had put too much hair-restorer on his head and hands: "l'enfant terrible qu'on a eu l'imprudence de laisser jouer avec un pot de Pomme de lion". That drawing became Shock-headed Peter; in the hand-written, hand-drawn and hand-coloured original it was banished to the very back of the book, as it was in the early published editions, based on lithographs commissioned by the firm of Rütten (later Rütten und Loening) and carefully supervised by the author himself. It soon proved so popular with children, however, that it was moved to the front; and a book originally entitled *Merry Stories and Funny Pictures (Lustige Geschichten und drollige Bilder)* became known the world over as *Struwwelpeter*. The original six tales had grown to ten by 1847; and when the publishers abandoned lithography in favour of woodcuts and copper engravings at the end of the 1850s, Hoffmann took the opportunity to revise his drawings and some of the rhymes, producing the version which most readers know. It is also the version with which the Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag has chosen to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the book's first appearance, supplementing the German text with Eduard Bornemann's Latin translation and with newly commissioned translations into English, French, Spanish and Italian.

The first surprise which awaits English readers when they turn to the new translation by Evan-K. Gibson in the polygot *Struwwelpeter* did not know. The story of Shock-headed Peter, for example, (renamed "Wicked Frederick" by Mr Gibson) now ends: "The whip he hangs upon the chair / and guards it with devoted care." The second surprise comes with the names of the characters. "Good dog Tray" becomes simply "the dog"; Harriet who played with matches is now "Polly"; Edward and Arthur turn into "Louie" and "Casper"; and the Augustus who would not eat his soup becomes "Casper" too. In every case the new names are closer to the German. Perhaps the biggest surprise is the name of the character who punishes the three boys who mocked the blackamoor: "Then great Agrippa foams with rage; / Look at him on this very page . . ." has been so much part of child mythology in England that it comes as a shock to read, in the Gibson version, "Then Nicolas flew into a rage. / It's in the picture on this page." And that, of course, corresponds closely to the German original: "Der Niklas wurde böse und wild. - / Du siehst es hier auf diesem Bild."

As his garb suggests, he is a Santa Claus who punishes as well as rewards; who plays the part, not only of the benevolent "helliger Nikolaus" with his sack full of gifts, but also of the servant who accompanies him, "Knecht Ruprecht", and whose function it is to beat unruly children with a bundle of twigs. Some nineteenth-century commentators sought political significance in the *Struwwelpeter* stories; they saw Shock-headed Peter as a German revolutionary, the Scissorman as a censor, Nikolaus as the Czar of Russia — and Hoffmann himself gave colour to such speculations when he wrote political satires excoriating revolutionaries and reacting to the 1848 uprisings. If those speculations exist, they have never been such overtones as those for whom *Struwwelpeter* was, after all, written, and they seem to me irrelevant.

Why the anonymous translator should have "hit upon" Agrippa as a suitable substitute for "Nicolas" in the Victorian nursery has always puzzled me. Neither Brewer nor Leoprière supply the answer; perhaps this review will elicit an explanation from readers more knowledgeable than I am. It will have become clear by now that the new English version keeps more closely to the German original than the old familiar one. Unfortunately, however, it seems less sure of its levels of speech. The Routledge and Piccolo version, which was first published by Blackie in 1903, read reassuringly like Victorian nursery tales for children who have not only "Mamma" (accent firmly on the second syllable), but also a "Nursy" who cares for them: "Me-ow, me-oo, meow, me-oo, / What will Mamma and Nursy do?" The language and idiom are all of a piece, and where it won't fit the German, it is the English idiom that wins out. The new version, on the other hand, is subject to some disconcerting stylistic lurches. Nicolas reproves the boys who mock the dark-skinned stranger with "don't's" and "isn't's" — "Don't laugh", he says "it isn't right" — and then goes all

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The Saint Nicholas-like figure of the "great Agrippa" from "The Story of the Inky Boys" in the Routledge edition of *Struwwelpeter*, reviewed here.

archaic when he tells them that the moor "did not choose his *darksome hue*". The little hare on whose nose coffee is spilt cries out "Wer hat mich da verbrannt?" in good everyday German; Gibson's "Who has thrown this fiery brand" is hardly on the same wavelength, though obviously nearer to the literal meaning of the German than the charming older version: "O dear, she cried, with spoon in hand: / Such fun I do not understand!" Or take Conrad's ill-fated thumb: "Fort geht nun die Mutter, und / Wuppi den Daumen in den Mund." That reads like good idiomatic German; Mr Gibson's "Wuppi! The thumb the mouth is in", on the other hand, is neither English or American. For the rest, there is an undeniable American flavour about Gibson's new translation: "Mamma" has turned into "Mommy", and Harriet is blessed with "folks".

It might be appropriate, therefore, to compare his version with the most famous of all previous American ones: that by Mark Twain. Here is the end of the "Wild Hunter" episode as Mark Twain interpreted it:

Now by the well in hiding lay
The rabbit's child and saw the fray.
And glanced aloft with aspect gay
Unwashed of the coffee spray.
And would have laughed, but changed his mind.
When that hot coffee struck him blind.
He knocked the spoon and capered out
With many a playful merriment about.
Who'd brought this accident about?

But when he saw it was his pa
He changed his mind again, aha!

Twain's transmutation of the poor little hare into a murderous avenger, however consonant with the spirit of the American tall tale, is so patently unsuited to Hoffmann's illustration that Gibson's more faithful though clumsier version seems to me preferable. The new translation has not made me want to discard the Victorian one, however; that has acquired a patina and a history of its own, and has, in any case, a stylistic integrity which the more faithful, more complete, but also more charmless Gibson version seems to lack.

What, then, is the key to the fascination Hoffmann's verses and pictures exert 140 years after they were first set down? Is the Scissorman story our early substitute for *Oedipus Rex*, and "Flying Robert" our first indulgence in a pleasure later satisfied by Erica Jong? Do we secretly enjoy rebelling with Shock-headed Peter and Fidgety Phil, blame the stupidity of parents who won't give Augustus anything but the soup he doesn't like, feel that the space into which Johnny Head-in-Air gazes is indeed much more fascinating than the school-work contained in the satchel we see swimming away into the distance, never to be recovered? Or are we being "got at" by authoritarian grown-ups intent on socializing children with tales of terror? It is the interplay of all this which makes for fascination; the ambiguity of it all; and the charming stylization of picture and text which again and again converts potential fright into laughter. It may not be irrelevant to remember, in this connection, that Dr Heinrich Hoffmann ended his days as an alienist whose understanding, patience and humanity contrasted favourably with the often cruel régime of others who had charge of asylums for the insane in nineteenth-century Europe.

We value *Struwwelpeter* also for the key role it has played in the evolution of the story in pictures between Rudolph Töpffer, and Wilhelm Busch; for its imaginative use of expressive gestures and significantly changing combinations of fantasy and play with necessary socializing elements; for its sympathy with a child's sense of fun; and for a child's apprehensions. Of its illustrations Bettina Hörnlein has rightly said that they "produce a symbolic hyper-reality which is far less dangerous for children than many of the photographic representations of similar happenings which they see every day . . ."

That some of the lessons *Struwwelpeter* inculcates are salutary may be an uncomfortable truth for those who condemn the book as authoritarian bullying; but "don't torture animals or beat those who are weaker than you" and "don't mock those whose skin is a different colour than yours" are as justifiable from the point of view of morality as "don't play with fire" and "look where you are going" are from that of prudence. On the feast provided for Freudians by words and pictures, from Frederick's tell-tale tongue and whip to Conrad's missing thumbs, I do not feel competent to comment; but it is worth remembering that at least one eminent psychologist, Charlotte Bühler, thought Hoffmann's book significant enough to name a stage of every normal child's development "the *Struwwelpeter* period".

One of the disadvantages of the new polygot *Struwwelpeter* is that the necessity of accommodating six different versions has broken up the delicate balance between picture and text which is so striking a feature of the original; but for that, its illustrations show fewer signs of later retouching than those of the Routledge version. Let us, therefore, wish Hoffmann's book a happy birthday and many happy returns in its new as well as its old guise, and fade into a polygot sunset with Flying Robert, his hat and his umbrella: "Wo der Wind sie hingetragen, / Ja! das weiss kein Mensch zu sagen." — "Oh les vents les ont menés, / impossible à deviner" — "Y como nunc volvieron, / nadie sabe adónde fueron" — "Dove andarono a finire, / no, nessuno lo sa dire" — "Quonam deportaverit / illos ventus, nemo scit." — "Where the wind blew them away / no one here below can say" — or, as the still delightful Victorian translation has it: "Only this one thing is plain / Bob was never seen again!"

Nowell, Nowell

Savkar Altinel

DOUGLAS UNGER
Leaving the Land
277pp. Heinemann. £9.95.
043481105 X

The subject of Douglas Unger's first novel is the rise and fall of turkey farming in South Dakota. The father of the heroine Marge Hogan actually grows mixed crops and keeps a few animals. After Pearl Harbor, however, the Department of Agriculture makes it known that the Army needs meat and sugar, and government subsidies will be available only to those raising sugar beets or turkeys. Like many of his neighbours, he opts for the latter and thus puts his future in the hands of the Safeway supermarket chain, which owns the turkey processing plant in the local town of Nowell.

The turkeys arrive and immediately cause problems for Marge. They have to be housed with chickens so that they can learn to peck by imitating them and not starve to death in front of their troughs full of grain: when they are taken out to feed on grasshoppers on the prairie they tend to break up into separate groups and go in different directions; their droppings constantly need to be checked for signs of turkey blackhead or salmonella; if it rains, they throw their heads back, open their beaks and drown; occasionally there are outbreaks of cannibalism.

After the war Safeway begins a system of "vertical integration" which involves the farmers pre-selling their unhatched turkeys to the company at a fixed price and then raising bank loans on the strength of their contracts. When feed prices rise, many are ruined because of this arrangement. There are angry demonstrations, television crews are invited from Cheyenne and Rapid City and turkeys are gassed wholesale and burnt in front of the cameras. The company, however, ultimately wins and in the process Marge's marriage to one of its lawyers disintegrates.

Next comes direct ownership of the land by

sell their title deeds and accept employment as "unit managers" of their one-time properties. Unfortunately, as managers they work for eight hours a day instead of sixteen, and soon the company itself begins losing money. An offer by some of the farmers to buy back their farms as a cooperative is rejected as "socialist agricultural policy". Then the government announces a grain control programme, backed by compensatory grants for not growing certain kinds of crops, and Safeway decides to convert the turkey farms into wheat farms so that it can make a profit by not planting wheat.

With the farms lying idle and the processing plant shut down, Nowell turns into a semi-ghost town. The unsaleable, abandoned houses decay, pieces of paper and cardboard swirl in the streets like tumbleweed, letters fall from shop signs. When Marge's son Kurt, who has gone East on a scholarship from a major university, returns for a visit some years later, he is struck both by the desolation of the place and the soulless efficiency of the town of Belle Fourche fifty miles away which has prospered at the expense of Nowell and now boasts one of the biggest Safeways in the area.

Had *Leaving the Land* amounted to nothing more than this simple narrative, it would have been an interesting but unremarkable novel about the devastating impact of capitalist business methods on a remote rural community. What raises it on to an altogether higher plane is its marvellously sensitive depiction of both the Midwestern countryside – coyotes barking in the night, the vast plains lying under a dusting of snow at Christmas time, clouds of tiny bats wheeling in the sky at dusk – and human experiences: Marge's father first arriving in South Dakota, backwards, in an ancient Ford that has stuck in reverse gear, Marge and her friends in tight skirts and hair styles copied from *Star & Screen* in the only café in Nowell, pretending to ignore the boys, Kurt learning to shoot with a "forty-five" he can barely lift. Nothing can now reverse the decline of the way of life Unger describes, but his beautiful and haunting book is at least a worthy monument

Hurting, hunting, haunting

Patricia Craig

JULIAN SYMONS (Editor)
Classic Crime Omnibus
378pp. Penguin. £3.95.
014006739 6
M. R. JAMES
The Complete Ghost Stories
362pp. Penguin. £4.95.
014009017 7
E. F. BLEILER (Editor)
The Best Supernatural Tales of Arthur Conan Doyle
302pp. Constable. £3.60.
048623725 7

In the annals of detective fiction, the short story comes first: Julian Symons has made this point before, and makes it again in his lively introduction to the Penguin *Classic Crime Omnibus* (a collection of detective tales which pretty well achieves the anthology's primary aim: to come up with material both unfamiliar and admirable). Starting in the Rue Morgue, blossoming in Baker Street, the short story, up until the end of the First World War, remained the preferred mode in this particular genre: it wasn't until 1920 that a change in style was signalled by the publication of *Styles*. From then on, the novel was paramount, though the story didn't altogether disappear. Shorter fiction allowed an outlet for kinds of ingenuity not suited to the novel. You get, for example, the story as extended conundrum, as in Edmund Crispin's and Geoffrey Bush's very striking "Who Killed Baker?", included here. With this type of offering the reader is happily led up the garden path, the ultimate effect depending on the aplomb with which the excursion is conducted. Other properties of the especially effective story are the piquant conclusion and the preposterous clue (as in Ellery Queen's "The Adventure of the Bearded Lady", another choice of Symons's); with the latter, our attention is productively focused on a singular circumstance. The short form, too,

doesn't do its doings: if he makes a jolly business of it, so much the better. Symons presents several stories in this vein, all of them good.

The exclusion of extraneous emotion, a requirement of the "modern" detective novel, needs to be even more rigorously practised with regard to the story; generally, the brisker and more laconic the narration, the better it is. Patricia Highsmith's "The Mobile Bed Object", for example, could hardly be drier or more economical; Roald Dahl's "The Landlady", equally deadpan, exemplifies the comic-sinister mode at its most restrained. These, to be sure, are stories of the present, more or less; we find other, more discursive or capacious examples from the Symons anthology reflecting the tastes of different eras; as the editor says, no "classic" collection can omit Poe or

Conan Doyle, and they're duly represented here. These are famous, of course, partly because the kinds of ingenuity displayed in their stories wear well.

You could claim the same merit for M. R. James, whose staid antiquaries, products of a more punctilious period than our own, are for ever uncovering pieces of the past in a highly unpleasant form: "from the eyebrows to the cheekbone, there were cobwebs – thick". James's conduits for his supernatural forces include a pair of field-glasses which facilitate a truly backward look, an unnaturally animated mezzotint, and – most famously – an Anglo-Saxon whistle complete with Latin inscription: "Who is this who is coming?" Who indeed.

M. R. James's stories are all warnings to the curious: frights, or worse, await those who go about, from whatever motive, poking their noses into the ineffable. Scholarly inquisitiveness proves the undoing of more than one seeker after knowledge. Things sealed up for centuries, you find, are simply waiting to be let out by the first misguided meddler who comes along. Dig up a post in a rose garden, and an unnerving face will come out at you from the shrubbery. Go after a buried Saxon crown, and more than you bargained for will emerge from the earth. Even if you do nothing more than sit innocently in an arbour, you may be startled by an odious instruction whispered in your ear: "Pull, pull. I'll push, you pull." A "horrible humping creature in white" gets into one story; and an ominous old parson in a cloak appears delectably in another. In "No. 13" a moment occurs after nightfall when two hotel rooms in a Danish town mysteriously rearrange themselves as three. All of these peculiarities conduce to a state of "Anxiety and Weakness at Night" in each M. R. James protagonist – to quote the staunch servant in "The Treasure of Abbott Thomas", who needs to exert all his strength to wrest his master from a non-human grasp.

"Last night Monty James read us a new Christmas story of most blood curdling character," wrote Henry James, and *Conan Doyle* of M. R. James. These, it's true, are tales for the dark time of the year, when a sinister pattern becomes discernible in a curtain, and a doll's house may easily seem supernaturally charged. Edwardian out-of-season resorts, sedate Queen Anne houses, historic libraries and chilling crypts – these are among the pungent settings decorously evoked. The supernatural stories of Arthur Conan Doyle (fifteen in E. F. Bleiler's collection, though the introduction claims he wrote only fourteen) are considerably more exotic, and less effective. A retired doctor undergoes a nightly ordeal involving a dead Indian in pursuit of his amputated hand; a person who sits up at night with an Egyptian mummy behaves peculiarly as a result of it. It was Conan Doyle's own opinion that the celebrity of his Holmes saga had obscured his achievement in other areas; his ghost stories, however, do not bear out this belief.

Cracking it

T. J. Binyon

E. W. HORNING
The Complete Short Stories of Raffles – The Amateur Crackman
475pp. Souvenir Press. £9.95.
028562640 X

It was an excellent idea to bring together for the first time all the exploits of A. J. Raffles, the well known amateur cricketer/cracksman. The narrator throughout is, of course, his faithful collaborator – earlier his faithful tag – Bunny: a rabbit at cricket, and not too quick on the uptake, but a decent and loyal chap at heart. With his aid one can trace Raffles's progress from the first, unpremeditated crime – a bank robbery committed during an Australian tour – through the recruitment of Bunny and the first safe and bottle of the Widow cracked together; their further successes and failures in rivalry both with the professionals and the police; Raffles's Italian idyll in Bali with the beautiful Faustina (while Bunny languishes in Pentonville); his rebirth as the valetudinarian Mr Macurkin, with a flat in Earl's Court; the revenge of the sinister and malignant Count Corbucci;

and the final apotheosis: Raffles, a volunteer trooper in an irregular cavalry regiment, is potted by a sniper during the Boer War.

That Raffles and Bunny are, in the end, not as successful a pair as Holmes and Watson, or Thorndyke and Jervis, is perhaps due to the fact that the methods of the hunter are always more interesting than those of the hunted, for Horning is a much better writer than either Conan Doyle (his brother-in-law) or R. Austin Freeman. Where they are solid, staid and humdrum, he is brilliant, fluent and impressionistic. And he has a nice ear, too, for the most prosaic pun: "What on earth are you going to do with this?" asks Bunny when he sees Raffles about to enlist, with a bottle of ladies' hair-dye. "Dye for my country", replies Raffles sweetly. Disguised as Mr Maturin, he is pushed round the Black Museum at Scotland Yard in a wheel-chair, and shown the relics of the celebrated burglar Charles Peace. "The greatest of the pre-Raffelites", he murmurs in an aside to Bunny.

This is an indispensable collection for the detective story addict. It comes with an interesting, but very dated essay by Orwell entitled "Raffles and Miss Blandish", and a knowledgeable foreword by Peter Haining.

The managing kind

Robert Fothergill

LORRAINE McMULLEN
An Odd Attempt In a Woman: The literary life of Frances Brooke
243pp. University of British Columbia Press, distributed by Academic and University Publishers. £22.95.
077480174 3

The specific "odd attempt" of this awkwardly-titled book is Frances Brooke's undertaking to publish, in 1755, a weekly paper, *The Old Maid*. More generally it is her pioneering effort to pursue a career as novelist, dramatist, and theatre-manager over a period of nearly thirty-five years. Considering the obstacles faced by anyone, let alone a woman, in the volatile and unscrupulous world of eighteenth-century literary London, she did rather well. Several of her novels, notably *Julia Mandeville* and *Emily Montague*, achieved widespread recognition; her theatre-pieces were favourably received; she counted among her friends such celebrities as Samuel Johnson, Fanny Burney, Samuel Foote, and the actress Mary Ann Yates; and her enemies were led by David Garrick. She was a literary personage of considerable repute.

Between 1763 and 1768 Frances Brooke lived in the city of Quebec, where her husband was serving as a chaplain to the English garrison. *Emily Montague* is situated principally in Canada, as is another work, *All's Right At Last*, published anonymously but generally ascribed to Mrs Brooke. In transporting her epistolary fictions to the "secret abode of wood-nymphs" across the Atlantic, Frances Brooke has thus earned the attention of a Canadian literary historian, and has been subjected to a conscientiously exhaustive documentation.

Lorraine McMullen had frankly subtitled her study a "literary life" to emphasize its scholarly-critical focus upon Frances Brooke's career as an author. Quite clearly the aim of the book is to fill a gap on literary shelves by assembling into one volume just about every available detail of the conception, composi-

tion, and reception of its subject's works. In addition it pursues the intermittently feminist project of promoting Frances Brooke as one who broke new ground in the advancement of women, both in her odd attempts and in the tenor of her fiction and drama.

Unfortunately what Professor McMullen's study gains in thoroughness it loses in interest. The portrait that emerges of this enterprising and determined woman is disappointingly flat and colourless, obscured rather than illuminated by the proliferation of monotonous detail. Hoping for an exciting account of her life as manager of the King's Theatre in the Haymarket from 1773 to 1778, the reader is overwhelmed by a torrent of facts, some which he could not possibly care about. Thus, every single person named *en passant* in connection with Mrs Brooke's career is painstakingly explicated in meandering subordinate clauses which should never have been released from the confines of the end-notes. An entire chapter is devoted to each of Mrs Brooke's publications, furnishing lengthy plot summaries and character descriptions, discussions of theme, style, and moral import, and extracts from contemporary reviews, British and foreign. The reviews quoted usually agree in finding the works to be ingenious, natural, and affecting, and to exhibit *Vérité, Pureté, and beaucoup d'intérêt*. Hostile reviewers inevitably turn out to be friends of David Garrick, if not Garrick himself under a *nom de plume*.

But where in all this is the living person? Whether for lack of evidence, or out of a reluctance to launch into the more imaginative currents of life-writing, McMullen is loth to stray from the objective, verifiable facts. Here, after an account of the plot, production, reception, and even receipts of *The Siege of Sinope* at Covent Garden in 1781, is her glimpse of the dramatist: "Frances Brooke had at last achieved her life-long ambition to write for the theatre. For a woman to write a tragedy was unusual at the time... *Emily Montague* is the first in the uncommon, and must have been a great satisfaction." Is that all?

The joys of death

David Sexton

SIDNEY HOMAN
Beckett's Theaters: Interpretations for performance
266pp. Associated University Presses. £21.
083873064 8

Beckett's critics go on, making more of less. For better or worse, his work is now securely instituted in academic literary criticism. That the man who said "Every word is an unnecessary stain on silence and nothingness" should be pursued by this flood-tide of exegesis is paradoxical, perhaps grotesque, and has been facilitated by a failure to take seriously the chilling premises of his writing. Given this, any new book about Beckett has to have something rather good to say for itself to earn a welcome.

Beckett's Theaters covers all the dramatic work up to 1981. Sidney Homan loves theatre so much that he interprets Beckett's plays as work of optimism, happiness and even joy, simply because they are successful plays. Beckett's theatre "thrives on the aesthetics of that present established by actor and audience", he says, which is certainly right – the function of the audience as witness, trying to make sense of what it sees and hears, is at the heart of his work for the stage. Homan, however, so adores drama that he goes beyond this to say that Beckett's plays are great because they are all centrally about this most important thing, the theatre, too. They are in fact self-reflexive. "The theatre turns to itself" is his high term of praise, as it was in his earlier book on Shakespeare: "the play's the thing" we are told repeatedly. This is a familiar and depressing claim. Were it true it would surely be a reason to think less rather than more of Beckett. Homan however does not make out a convincing case. His argument is conducted with a conceptual apparatus consisting of two terms, "what is said (thematics)" and how it is being said (aesthetics).

thetics). The critical ploy is to reduce the former to the latter, and be grateful. Of the characters in *Play*: "Their thematic discomfort is our aesthetic comfort." Of *Cascando*: "Aesthetic life springs from thematic death." Homan believes the theatre will save us. "In a joyous sense, the theater is the best preparation we have for any future, and – at length – for death itself." This is quite bizarrely remote from Beckett.

Nor are these contentions winningly presented. The book plods through the works from beginning to end, paraphrasing. His comment has a texture of professionalism derived from being filtered through the massive second-hand literature, but he makes startling mistakes of his own. He believes Krapp wrote a book called *Effie* which sold thirteen copies, and he refers warmly to one (or two) of the best Beckett critics as, "John Knowlson" throughout. There are no distinctive critical judgments here, either of the stature of the plays as a whole (Beckett has described them as relaxations from the novels) or of one in relation to another (he thinks as highly of the *Acts Without Words* as of anything). The prose is constructed from critical breeze blocks: "Curious... (when the fact is too dull to stand undecorated), 'I take x as...' (exactly what you would expect), 'on the other hand', 'in the broadest sense of the word', 'what we may call', 'I would argue', and so on. Moreover the text is sorely misprinted.

It has been found necessary before to make Beckett into something more amenable than he really is so as to fit him up as a suitable subject for scholarship and teaching, but rarely to this extent. William Empson memorably described Beckett as "like a dog with its back broken by a car, screaming and thrashing on the public road, so that a passer-by can only wish for it to be put out of its misery." Of Empson's dog Homan makes a pet. The process is more dispiriting to watch than any of Beckett's theatre.

Dancing the story

Julie Hankey

IVOR GUEST
Julius Perrot: Master of the romantic ballet
383pp. Dance Books. £20.
090310277 3

Ivor Guest is the first biographer of Perrot, and one can see why. The man left scarcely any trace of himself except in his work, which itself was conducted in an ephemeral medium. He kept no diary, wrote no memoirs, hardly a letter even. He did not note down his scenarios himself, or comment on them, or express his views on ballet – as Noverre, for example, had done. (He did jot a few notes in the margin of his copy of Noverre's *Lettres*, which Guest gratefully seizes on.) He was, in other words, entirely absorbed in his chosen material – the dancer's perishable body – and in all the equally unending stuff of stage spectacle. He is remembered now, if at all, as the person chiefly responsible for realizing Gautier's scenario for *Giselle* – the only one of his ballets to survive into modern times outside the Soviet Union. All the more reason, it could be said, to pin him down in a book, and Mr Guest makes a good case – for Perrot, we learn, was the Gluck of ballet. Or rather, Noverre was, and Perrot carried the torch forward into the Romantic period. As was the case with eighteenth-century opera, ballet had fallen into the hands of gymnastic virtuosi. Their technical displays bore little relation to the dramatic interest of the plot, which was furthered instead by long stretches of recitative, or, in ballet, by mime. In these gaps the audience played draughts, or had supper parties. Perrot's achievement was to integrate the two things, the story and its ostensible medium, in order to make ballet expressive of something beyond its own technique. This was called, in Noverre's phrase, the *ballet d'action*.

Without Perrot, then, the great dramatic ballerinas of the period, such as Fanny Elssler and Marie Taglioni, were "actresses, not less, and no less called a poet, sculptor, painter. It was said that

through his scenic and plastic imagination the ballet caught the very essence of magic and mystery – more so than any other art form could. And yet, from the published scenarios and a few bits of hostile criticism (which, paradoxically, are often the most vivid), one gathers that Perrot was not always free from gratuitous exhibition. As he got older he piled on plot and spectacle, real rain and fire and lots of flying harness and thick cable (supporting "200 to 300 kilos of fairies") wrote a reviewer of one particular spectacle) until, in the end, he was making ballets five hours long.

Guest is a loyal biographer, perhaps a little more impressed with his subject than his reader can always be, but he does not hesitate to quote a description by Fyodor Dostoevsky of a certain fishermen's dance in which there figures an oar. The oar is at first casually introduced simply as a marine adjunct. It is larger than an ordinary oar though, and it has a notch in the middle of it. The reason for this becomes apparent when, after one of the fishermen has placed one end of the oar against his shoulder and the other on the ground, Ondine, a naiad, arrives and places one leg in the notch. The other she extends in the air. "Then she slowly rotates her leg. The stalwart male dancer keeps the oar steady, trying to show that it is no effort, and that it even gives him great pleasure." After a bit, the naiad leaps down as lightly as thistle-down, and "continues to express her feelings with her legs". Apparently audiences would then call for an encore. "Once again the male dancer burdens his shoulder with a hundred pounds or so of thistle-down-light ballerina, and the leg... slowly makes its circle."

The end of Perrot's life was sad. His public tired of his hazy narratives. He had educated them away from acrobatics, and they rightly saw an expressiveness inherent in ballet which did not need the complicatedly vengeful Vlasto or the lovelorn Zingaro to be made apparent. Mr Guest is meticulous. Literary sources for the ballets are brought to bear, contemporary pose.

Staging the moral

G. McCarthy

H. GASTON HALL
Comedy In Context: Essays on Molière
260pp. University Press of Mississippi. \$20.
087805200 3

In 1954 René Bray advised the readers of his *Molière: Homme de théâtre* not to expect to find Molière where they might look for Boileau and Racine and implied that a hundred years of Molière study had succeeded in creating a bogus Molière, the philosopher and moralist. Thirty years on, H. Gaston Hall's book re-examines the context within which we should view the playwright. *Comedy In Context* assembles a dozen articles published over a twenty-year period in which Molière's fortunes have not been all that Bray might have hoped. For this reason, Dr Hall's compilation is both instructive and opportune.

When Louis Jouvett pronounced Molière "mort en Sorbonne" he recognized that a gulf existed between the theatre and scholarly criticism. He saw the creative energy of Molière's comedy reduced to so many statements, and replied with productions which celebrated Molière as a master of theatrical invention, not as the chronicler of the manners of his age. Hall is well equipped to bridge this divide: his scholarship is admirable and the depth of his literary and historical analysis impressive. He also has a fine intuition for the vitality in Molière. While providing a most detailed literary context, particularly for the middle-period plays, he makes it clear that contemporary ideas are to be viewed as a resource. The ideas of comedy live in performance:

Above all I conclude a tight relationship between comic stagecraft and moral significance, which is not that of Molière's sources, but that of Molière. Doubtless the precise nature of this relationship must always depend upon a very personal reconstruction of that stagecraft.

The best essays in this volume encourage a bolder attitude to stagecraft in Molière. For example, the discussion of his recurrent *dépit amoureux* scenes emphasizes the eroticism of performance in relationship to the social and theatrical context, and describes a shared physical experience held in tension with the moral sense. This accounts well for the forms of comedy and is strikingly close to what may have been Molière's own thoughts on the subject, if he really was the author of the *Lettre sur la comédie*. The essay on Molière's debt to Scaramouche corrects an error in W.G. Moore's still indispensable study and provides a valuable suggestion of acting style, confirming the impression of flexibility seen in the texts. In studying the editions themselves, Hall reveals the astonishing fact that in re-punctuating the texts, editors have frequently suppressed rhythms which Molière may have required. Hall shows the detailed changes, and leaves us to grasp the implication of this massive disregard for the place of rhythm in the performance of a dramatic text.

Here, as sometimes elsewhere, he develops his view meticulously without however enlarging on the detail, and in this respect the book fails to satisfy the expectations it arouses. Dr Hall provides everything but the overview.

To Brecht and Beyond: Soundings in modern dramaturgy by Darko Suvin (283pp. Brighton: Harvester. £28.50. 0855279753) contains nine essays on modern theatre written between 1967 and 1977 and mostly published in the United States. The author surveys the politics, performance and aesthetics of Brechtian theatre. There are chapters on "The Paris Commune: Theatre Law", "Structures of a Slaughterhouse World (*Sahni Jom of the Slaughterhouses*)", "Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle and Marxist Figuralism", "Coriolan or Leninism as Utopian Horizon", and "Beckett's Purgatory of the Individual or the Three Laws of Thermodynamics".

John Co. 136

